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SERMONS,

ACADEMICAL AND OCCASIONAL,

BY

THE REV. JOHN KEBLE, M.A.

VICAR OF HURSLEY,

AND LATE FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Thou shalt no more be haughty because of My holy mountain.

Zephaniah iii. 17.

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TO THE REVEREND
WILLIAM NICHOLAS DARNELL, B.D.

SOMETIME TUTOR OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD,
NOW RECTOR OF STANHOPE IN THE BISHOPRIC OF DURHAM,

THIS VOLUME

IS INSCRIBED,

IN EVER-GRATEFUL MEMORY

OF INVALUABLE HELPS AND WARNINGS,

RECEIVED FROM HIM IN EARLY YOUTH

BY HIS

FAITHFUL FRIEND AND SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E,

ON THE

P R E S E N T P O S I T I O N O F E N G L I S H C H U R C H M E N .

THE Discourses which are here collected, all of them, profess and endeavour more or less to take a popular view of certain great ecclesiastical subjects, to which of late years our attention has been providentially drawn. It will not then be out of place, to introduce them with some few remarks on the kind of evidence to which they appeal, and the principles which ought to guide the judgment of such as may be likely to read them, on the points which now unhappily are most debated among us. I do not mean points merely speculative, but practical questions of duty, arising out of our relation, as individual members, to the Body of Christ, which is His Church.

For it is a sad truth, that no one of us is safe from being called on, at any moment, to exercise something like a judgment of his own, on matters which in better times would have been indisputably

settled for him. If we are spared external persecution, and escape trials of our faith and courage, we are tempted perhaps more severely than the early Christians on the side of intellectual pride and wilfulness. Our guide is comparatively out of sight, and we are the more tempted to be our own guides; and all thoughtful persons know how that must end.

Yet it is certain by our Lord's express promise, that if we have but "a good will to do His Will" unreservedly, we "shall know of the doctrine;" sooner or later, "God will reveal unto us" that wherein we are "otherwise minded." Our Saviour spoke it of those who were not yet Christians, St. Paul of Christians whose creed was yet imperfect. The two promises together seem to provide for all cases. It cannot be imagined that they pass over the very distressing case, now unhappily so frequent among us, of persons believing the Holy Catholic Church, but doubting more or less of their own place within it. Amidst all our care, and perplexity, whether for ourselves, or those dear to us, or entrusted to our care, we are graciously permitted to repose with undoubting faith on this one most merciful assurance, that sincere goodness will in the end find its home in the place from whence it came. The pure in heart shall finally see God.

Having this faith at the bottom of our hearts, in the firm and humble purpose to do and suffer all that He may clearly reveal to be His will, we

* St. John vii. 17; Philipp. iii. 15.

may address ourselves calmly, without consternation or amazement, to the inquiry, whether He has clearly revealed the course which He approves in the emergency now imagined. For the conduct of such inquiry, I am now about to suggest a few leading thoughts: not professing to argue out any of the points, but simply to set them down as worthy of grave consideration.

A dutiful person in the English Church, we will suppose, has in some way been made aware of the sayings and feelings of good Roman Catholics concerning her; and with the fact, that some of those sayings meet with more or less countenance in antiquity: or he has come to be greatly impressed with the sanctity and other attractions undeniably existing in the communion of Rome: and the thought begins to haunt him, "What if her exclusive claim be true? What if it should prove, that as yet I have been living without the pale of Christ's Kingdom?"

How is he to deal with such misgivings? Shall he suppress them with a strong hand, as he would impure or murderous thoughts?

It would be hard to prove him wrong in doing so. It would be hard, very hard, to overbear the claim of something like natural piety, urging on us that it is an undutiful thing to doubt whether she be our real Mother, who has ever professed to be so, and who has done a mother's part by us,

from childhood until now. As in families it would be a wild and unnatural supposition, for any one of the children to begin doubting, whether their reputed parents are their real ones; arguing the point, and requiring demonstration of it:—as it is a thing from which we recoil even in fictitious stories, counting it an extravagant and unreal device:—so and much more in so serious an affair as this, by how much it is more shocking to undervalue God’s mysterious and heavenly gifts, than those which relate to this world only. And if any, through their own or other’s neglect, have grown up among us—(alas, that the case should be so common!)—unconscious of their spiritual Mother’s care, and unwarned of their duty towards her, and so should have fallen into grievous sin: how much more miserable to think that they should make this their undutifulness a plea for disloyalty, and say in effect, “You did not keep me in order, therefore I disown you!” Who can deny that there may be, on the one hand, so devout and unwearied an use of the means of grace offered among us, that for the person so favoured to indulge in doubt and misgiving would be simple ingratitude and irreverence, and therefore in such an one not imaginable: on the other hand, such open neglect of them, as to make the very act of comparing and judging profane? In both those cases, then, it seems a plain duty to reject scruples before they be meddled with: and if in these two

extreme cases it be a duty, how should it be a sin in those which are intermediate? which, partaking alternately of both, suggest to the conscience continually one of two thoughts: either, "If I were always as good as I sometimes feel that I might be, I should have no temptation to doubt:" or, "Until I am a great deal better than I now am, I have no right to dwell on doubts."

For reasons like these, a person would not seem blameable, perhaps we might well judge his course the most reasonable of any, who should bring himself to reject all scruples concerning our Church with a strong moral abhorrence, as he would any other evil imagination. But it is not every one, perhaps, who could bring himself to do so; and many, moreover, being more or less answerable for others, may be bound in charity to consider the special matter of their misgivings, and to be provided with some sufficient solution of them: sufficient, I mean, to direct a simple man's practice, not necessarily sufficient to silence an acute man's objections.

Those who have learning and leisure may be referred to the many learned and pious Apologists, by whose labour, from Hooker downwards, the cause of the English Church, apart from that of mere Protestantism, has been providentially illustrated and defended. If any thing to be said in this Preface, or in the Sermons which follow, sound as if spoken in disparagement of them and of their

cause, the writer most heartily disavows it, and wishes it, so far, unwritten. But what are those many to do, who are obviously unable to enter on the task of examining controversial works? Happily we have not far to seek for principles, real, weighty, and powerful in themselves, and in their application sufficiently clear, to guide such persons along the narrow way. Englishmen of ordinarily good education have been led of late years, I may say providentially, to the pages of Bishop Butler, as to a never-failing help in their struggles against practical unbelief: and from the very nature of the case, we cannot be wrong in applying his rules to the doubts now mentioned, which tend, in their measure, to unbelief. What are those rules?

Without pretending to any great exactness of statement, we may say in general, that they are such as the following: That in practical matters of eternal import, the "safer way" (rightly understanding that term) is always to be preferred, even though the excess of seeming evidence may tell in any degree on the opposite side. Thus, if one mode of acting imply that there is an eternity, and another contradict it; though we suppose a mind utterly incapable of comprehending the evidence for it, and quite awake to the objections and difficulties, still the tremendous, overwhelming interest at stake ought to determine a man's conduct to the affirmative side. He should act, in spite of seeming evidence, as if eternity were true.

Another rule will be, that in estimating theological statements, no account need be taken of objections, which apply as well to acknowledged facts in God's natural and moral government, as to those which are in dispute. For example; *a priori* objections to the general doctrine of mediation are cancelled at once by the observation, that God has made the natural good of His creatures to depend in so great a degree on the voluntary interference and instrumentality of other creatures.

On the other hand, (and this may be set down as a third rule,) any positive analogies to actual experience which we may be enabled to point out, may reasonably tell towards confirming our faith in a system which has stood the two former tests. Thus, the relation of Judaism to Christianity having been accepted upon its proper evidence, it is an allowable satisfaction, and reasonably adds to our full conviction of the doctrine, to reflect on the analogy which it bears to God's providential education of individuals, by childhood and youth training them up to manhood.

These, as all men know, are some of the chief principles, whereby such writers as Butler and Pascal have maintained Christianity against unbelief. Why may we not apply them as well to the maintenance of orthodoxy against heresy? or (which comes to the same thing) to the practical guidance of individual consciences among different schools within the Church?

I am aware indeed that a feeling exists, which would limit the principles in question to the controversy with unbelievers, and would explain some of the sad misunderstandings which prevail, by ascribing them to an attempt to settle debates among Churchmen by appeal to these maxims; which are allowed to be sound in themselves, but supposed irrelevant to our case.

But, in the first place, Bishop Butler himself was clearly not aware of any such limitation. He says, broadly and without all exception, "To us, probability is the very guide of life." He maintains, that when a person is in suspense about religion, "it ought in all reason, considering its infinite importance, to have nearly the same influence upon practice, as if it were thoroughly believed. For," he adds, "would it not be madness for a man to forsake a safe road, and prefer to it one in which he acknowledges there is an even chance he should lose his life, though there were an even chance likewise of his getting safe through it?" Further; he applies his principles to the settlement of matters debated among those who profess to receive the Scriptures: such as the nature and degrees of Inspiration, the use of Tradition, the doctrine of Vicarious Suffering.

In the next place, the distinction alleged is far from self-evident. The three rules above specified lose nothing of their axiomatic force, when contemplated with a view (*e. g.*) to the Predestinarian

controversy, or to those which regard Church government, rather than to those which Bishop Butler had directly in his thoughts. At least, if such be the case, it requires to be distinctly shewn why and how. The burden of proof lies on the opponent. The rules themselves profess to be grounded on the essential conditions of human life and practice, not on any circumstances in the matters which Butler applies them to: and if any part of life claim to be exempted from them, the exemption surely ought to be specially made out.

In the absence of clear explanation on this matter, may we not suspect without unfairness, that it is not so much any argumentative difficulty, as certain uneasy feelings, which have prompted the scruple? It was hastily concluded, perhaps, that the principles of Pascal and Butler, carried out, would tell practically in favour of Rome: the very contradictory of which, as I shall endeavour presently to shew, is the truth, in regard at least of English Churchmen.

Or there was an unwillingness to acquiesce in any thing (to use Butler's expression) so "poor." It is naturally enough surmised, that an earnest living faith, in those details especially of Catholic Truth, which bear most immediately on personal religion, can hardly be built up upon statements so guarded and hesitating: much in the same way as a traveller would shrink beforehand from venturing on a road, whose foundation is mere

quaking moss and turf; which nevertheless experience has proved secure and available. Thus a prejudice has always existed against Bishop Butler's argument, among those who most long for somewhat of inspiration, and watch most eagerly for direct tokens from above: a prejudice which of course exerts and realizes itself more, as the argument comes to touch more nearly on those transcendental and affecting truths, whereby Faith, if one may so say, lives and moves and has her being^b. "Possibly," "perhaps," "why should it not be so?"—these and other like forms of speech, sound strangely cold and unmeaning to young and ardent spirits, trained to throw themselves, wholly and undoubtingly, on sacred words, which come to them with a thrilling conviction of the very doctrines which they now hear so languidly spoken of. It is a generous and devotional feeling; still it is feeling, not reason, and proceeds on an inadequate view of the necessary imperfection of this our mortal state.

Objectors of a somewhat different class may not improbably complain, that they are urged to believe certain doctrines, on the strength of certain analogies and figures, which for aught they know may be mere play of imagination. This makes them jealous and impatient: they wait not to consider the proper force of such topics, in confirming known truths and meeting objections, but discard

^b Compare Anal. p. 2. c. v. §. 3. p. 273, 4.

them altogether, as alien to the clear light of the Gospel: forgetting that the great reasoner himself has plainly declared, that the proper force of analogy lies in answering objections, and that when positive, it is merely subsidiary to more direct arguments.

Yet a very little consideration will make it obvious, that by thus excepting against probabilities and analogies, men are in fact indefinitely narrowing the reach and extent of Faith as a principle of action. They are limiting it to a few great and trying moments and occasions: whereas it is clearly spoken of in Scripture as the mainspring of our ordinary life. For how few comparatively are the instances, in which men are able to act without any doubt or misgiving at all, or any notion that something may be said on both sides! Now all but such cases, on the hypothesis now mentioned, are taken out of the province of Faith.

And how is this consistent with holy Scripture? since "hope which is seen is not hope:" and "faith is the substance," the realizing, "of things hoped for," the "evidence, or making venture," of things not seen. When objects therefore, either earthly or heavenly, present themselves to the mind as distinctly as though they were seen, there is no room any longer for either hope or faith, properly so called. To say that probability, as opposed to intuition or demonstration, is the very guide of life and duty;—in other words, that moral questions must be decided by moral not

mathematical evidence ;—so far from excluding the action of a generous faith, is the only statement which gives faith unlimited scope.

Again: to urge on a person the wisdom and duty of taking “the safe way,” may sound indeed at first like cold calculation, but is practically a principle of faith, since it must ever issue in preferring eternity to time. Perhaps too, even metaphysically, it may imply a righteous Governor of the world: for how can there be any comparison of safe or unsafe, if all be left at random? And granting the comparison, why should we trust our own impressions about it, except through an instinctive faith in the veracity of one who caused us to have such impressions? Who knows but the like instinct may lie at the foundation of the whole way of reasoning from analogy? Bishop Butler has put the question without solving it, “Whence it proceeds that likeness should beget that presumption, opinion, and full conviction, which the human mind is formed to receive from it, and which it does necessarily produce in every one?” It seems not unnatural to say to one’s self, Perhaps the tendency may arise from an instinct, unconsciously recognising His Presence and Power, Who actuates all things, and moves them by general laws. For example, our faith in the course of nature, in our own senses, or in our personal identity, when we come really to consider it, is scarcely intelligible but as faith in the God of

Nature, “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” And so the very notion of reasoning at all from analogy may seem to stand on a religious basis.

There may possibly be other and deeper objections to the proposed application of Bishop Butler’s principles, which also may be met on the other side by deeper and more searching replies. But it may not be useless thus briefly to have noticed these popular misapprehensions. Let us now revert to the first of them, which alone needs to be here examined in detail.

An apprehension then exists, that the principle of taking at all events “the safer way,” being applied to our controversy with Roman Catholics, tells *prima facie* against the Anglican side. The Roman statement, put broadly and coarsely, is as follows. It is allowed by English Catholic Divines, such as Hooker, that a Roman Catholic, walking dutifully in the ways of his Church, is unquestionably within the kingdom and covenant of Christ, and therefore in a safe way, by God’s mercy, towards everlasting salvation. On the other side, Roman theologians do by no means make the same concession to the English Church: they merely allow her sincere members the same plea of invincible ignorance, which they do not deny to the most uninstructed of the heathen. Upon this it is argued,—and there is in the argument an air of

downright common sense, not unattractive to the English mind especially:—"The good Roman Catholic is safe, by consent of both parties: not so the good English Catholic: therefore a prudent person will lose no time in ranging himself on the side of the former."

The slightest consideration, however, shews, that the argument put in this form proves too much: for it would equally shew that Puritanism, or Mahometanism, or the ancient Donatism, or any other exclusive system, is the safer way: since we, I suppose, should not hesitate to hope and pronounce favourably of sincere and good persons, living and dying Puritans, or even Mahometans, simply through invincible ignorance: but they would stiffly, I imagine, deny that we, continuing as we are, could have any portion in God's mercy. This should be enough, surely, to prevent any, even the simplest, from being overpowered by the mere boldness of a system more exclusive than that to which himself belongs.

But there is more than this, it may be urged, in the statement we are now considering. The advocates for change may say, that they proceed not upon their own assertions, but upon our free concessions. "You enumerate," they may allege, "certain conditions of salvation;—faith in the Creeds, partaking of the Sacraments, communion with the visible Church;—all which we plainly have, and many rites and doctrines besides, which

you must either affirm to be ordinarily contrary to salvation, as some extreme controversialists on your side do, or else you cannot escape the inference, that ours is the safer way, the way to be chosen upon Butler's and Pascal's rule."

This being, as it is hoped, no unfair representation of the argument, I ask, Do not all generous minds feel in it, before examination, something unsatisfactory? Does it not give a cold, dry, hard interpretation to the term "safer way," reminding one rather of a dextrous diplomatist insisting on the literal terms of a treaty, than of a loyal and affectionate son and subject, committing himself unreservedly to the King and Father of all? In fact, when we come to analyse it, it clearly assumes the utilitarian theory of morals. It assumes that the greatest discernible good of the individual is the proper measure, to him, of right and wrong. Whereas if we grant a righteous Governor of the world, the "safe way" of course must be, not what is visibly best for ourselves, but what is most pleasing to Him—most apparently on His side in the great conflict between good and evil. We must bind ourselves by an unchangeable rule, never to do evil that good may come; no not for the seeming certainty of the greatest good, the eternal salvation of our brethren's souls and our own. We must make up our minds to suspect all such appearances, however plausible, and count them fallacious, if they involve a contradiction of a plain

moral duty. As the Apostle says,—(may it be permitted without irreverence so to apply sacred words ?—) “Though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

To some this will sound as if we were fairly giving up the principle of the “safer way :” but it is not really so. We are merely allowing for an additional element, which the nature of the case requires, in the calculation by which we judge of “safety :” additional, I mean, to those which Butler and Pascal had chiefly to contemplate. They had to deal in the first place with such as denied eternity : and so far, the bare statement of terms was enough to indicate the “safe way.” But here Eternity is granted, and we have to choose among conflicting systems, each professing to secure happiness in it. And being by supposition incompetent to decide upon the masses of direct evidence, which these systems severally allege, we look to analogy for further help in determining “the safe way ;” and we find it altogether confirming the impression to which unbiassed instinct would lead us : viz. that the world being under moral government, the “safe way” in uncertain cases must be that which is most agreeable to the duties we are before certain of. “He that is willing to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.”

On this principle, neither the Roman nor any other communion would be the "safe way" to a person who could not enter into it without involving himself in moral guilt: if, for instance, it were required as a condition of his baptism that he should confess a crime, whereof he knows himself to be innocent. What could such an one do, but continue formally excommunicate, and hope that in the sight of God he was virtually not so?

Cases again may be conceived affecting practice, in which the seeming logical or historical evidence may tell almost wholly on one side, yet it may be clearly right to prefer the other, by reason of some moral instinct, which comes in and will not let itself be unfelt. Suppose a man's parent accused of any great crime: let the amount of apparent proof against him be never so overwhelming, none will deny that it is the child's duty, come what will, to disbelieve his guilt if he can; to give him the benefit not only of reasonable doubt, but of any the faintest and remotest possibility of innocence; and to act accordingly, disregarding all personal consequences. Now this is but one out of a thousand instances, wherein the moral sense is mercifully empowered to correct the errors of the intellect, or supply its imperfections. Few in comparison are judges of evidence, but all may listen to the inward voice, directing them in such matters to the safer side.

Let us now, very briefly, apply these principles to the case before us. And by way of proving their strength more entirely, we will grant for the present far more than the truth demands. We will suppose, on the one side, a great array of facts, authorities, and arguments, which a person does not know how to refute, (though he cannot say but it is very possible some refutation may exist, as yet unknown to him, or that counter-statements equally strong might be made :) and on the other side, only the simple principle, “*quieta non movere*: wherever a man is called, there let him abide with God:” even this alone ought assuredly to go a good way. Mere contentment and resignation to the Divine will, which has cast our lot where it is, in spiritual and intellectual no less than in temporal respects, ought in all reason to make us slow to change. “I am where God has seen fit to place me; surely this one consideration entitles me to throw the burden of proof entirely on those who call on me to alter my profession.” “Be content with such things as ye have:” be minute therefore and scrupulous in examining, (if your duty really call on you to examine,) whatever is said to separate you from your present Communion: look at it with a jealous, unfavourable eye, and shew to the other side proportional favour. For whatever else is right or wrong, this you are quite sure must be right; “in whatsoever state you are, therewith to be content,”

until you discern *unequivocal* manifestations of God's will calling you out of it.

Again ; some questions are felt to be of a kind, which it requires a certain daring and hardihood of mind to answer in an intellectual way : and no doubt there are persons, who, when such a subject occurs to them, feel it as a kind of challenge to do their best in grappling with it. *They* acknowledge it as a call of Providence, a venture which they are summoned to make ; but intellects of the average sort instinctively draw back ; and are they not right in so doing ? Doubtless, the extent and complication of an argument, the number and magnitude of the points involved in it, the quantity of information which may be accumulated on it ;— these are so many indications of its not being meant to be decided by common persons. They call on us for a wise self-distrust ; and self-distrust is a temper so suitable to us and our condition, that whatever course implies most of it has so far a presumption in its favour.

Again ; the same remark applies, still more strongly, to the temper of mind which is turned by grace into contrition ; the inclination to magnify rather than extenuate our faults. If, on comparison of two modes of thinking and acting, one is decidedly more favourable than the other to the cultivation of this great spiritual talent ; this is, so far, a declaration of Providence in favour of one rather than the other.

Further; God's approving mark has been very emphatically set upon those who go as it were out of themselves to meet and welcome goodness in others. True though it be, that no man uninspired is an adequate judge of his neighbour's holiness; and much as we may fear, that in some late instances too much has been said of visible sanctity as a sufficient test of truth; yet we may be sure, it is not for nothing that God has made it simply impossible for us to refrain altogether from comparisons and judgments of that sort. And besides, (to mention no more Scripture sayings,) none shall "rest upon God's holy hill," who "maketh" not "much of them that fear the Lord^c." To have safe repose in the true Church, we must encourage in ourselves a great love and zeal for the holiness which He gives us to see and know in our brethren. Thus we seem to be supplied with a fourth moral test, to help in ascertaining our duty when we are called on to change our faith. We may ask ourselves, which is the more respectful way, the freer from unworthy suspicions, in regard of those, who to all outward appearance are doing their best to serve God.

Observe, I do not say that we are directed, or qualified, to take either that side where the holiest persons may be found, or that wherein the average standard of practical goodness is the highest. I have just said that such comparisons were probably

^c Psalm xv. 4.

never intended to be made by us. But it is one thing to weigh and measure other men's sanctity, another to love sanctity, and cling to it, wherever God puts it in our way: to love it the more the nearer He has brought it to ourselves, and to shrink from all that tends to disparage it.

I will add yet one more, and that a most unquestionable element of right decision in all practical matters; the probability of scandal—of causing our brethren to sin. No personal interest, surely, of his own,—not even the most immediate peril of his own soul,—can exempt a Christian man from the necessity of attending to the effect of his behaviour on others. If the Redeemer Himself rose up from His prayer and His Agony to wait on the spiritual need of His disciples, it is plainly impossible for a Christian man, in any conjuncture, to be innocently regardless of giving scandal. When the course to be pursued is most evident, this consideration must come in to regulate the manner of proceeding: clearly, then, in questionable cases, it must be an important ingredient in determining the course itself.

On the whole, we have enumerated *five* points, in which the moral sense may come in to determine “the safest way,” whether in aid or in default of historical or abstract reasoning, or in some cases even against it. We may ask ourselves, which of two decisions is more in unison, first, with contentment; secondly, with intellectual

modesty; thirdly, with contrition; fourthly, with love of sanctity in others; fifthly, with fear of giving offence.

It is not of course meant, that there may not be instances, in which the will of God is so plainly revealed, by direct communication from Himself, or by overwhelming external evidence, as to supersede this kind of consideration altogether. But where the revelation, or the evidence, admits of question, there, I say that we are thrown back more or less on moral tests, such as have been suggested; that each one of them according to its measure deserves to be gravely thought on, as in the sight of God; that where they concur in any great number, the providential warning becomes awful, more than in proportion to their number,—the danger of slighting them is not only increased but multiplied; and that the unequivocal presence of them all is such an indication which way our duty lies, as can only be overborne by manifestations almost miraculous.

Here it will of course be said, that it is easy for a zealous advocate to select points of this kind, no cause whatever being entirely without them, and so to make out any case at his pleasure. But really the matter is too serious to be disposed of by any such general remark. Let those who are inclined so to deal with it, ask themselves as in the Presence of Almighty God, whether these and other like considerations have not indeed been chosen out

for their trial, not by any human pleader, but by His Providence, so that they cannot be neglected, or scornfully over-ruled, without profane disregard of Him. Certainly there do exist such points of detail in every grave question of conduct: and the enabling good and pure minds to discern and appreciate them seems to be the very process, whereby the Guide and Comforter of souls fulfils His Promise, "The meek shall He guide in judgment." This may be the kind of argument which our Divine Master intended, when He said, 'Ye shall know them by their fruits.' The most natural paraphrase of that saying seems to be, "The legitimate results of the doctrine on life and behaviour, where they can be ascertained, are a sufficient test of its truth: and you, if you try to serve God in earnest, will find help to avail yourselves of this test." For instance, since "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness;" if it were once shewn that a certain set of opinions—the Manichæan suppose, or the old Anabaptist,—tended towards positive impurity; this alone would shew that there was in them, viewed *as* opinions, something opposed to the fundamental truth of Religion—inconsistent with the idea of a Moral Governor of the world. That would be a plain and palpable case, and would strike on pure minds with a force like mathematical demonstration. In other instances, such as we are now concerned with, we can but follow the more probable course; secure

of guidance, if we follow it with a sincere and simple heart. To this extent, the promises are sure and universal: "Ye shall know them by their fruits;" and, "If in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

Moral Tests then are indispensable: only let them be fairly and religiously applied. I have mentioned a certain number, which obviously, I think, claim to be regarded in any proposed change of religion. The next step in our reasoning would be to shew, that in the question, 'Whether an English Churchman is bound to submit himself to the Church of Rome,' all these considerations tell very distinctly on the English side.

The next, to inquire whether the evidence for Rome is of that overpowering force, which might justify a man in disregarding all such impressions.

Afterwards, with a view to the same question, we might compare the case between Rome and England with other cases, which some might deem parallel to it.

Upon all which would follow certain conclusions, as to the line which Divine Providence seems to have marked out for us English Catholics, and as to some of the probable results, would all agree to walk by that line.

Now then, remembering all along that we are not drawing out, but simply indicating, our argument, let us proceed to the application of our

moral tests. As to the first, the promotion of contentedness, it may sound like a mere truism to say, that it is best answered by that theory, which would cause each man to remain where he is. But different virtues are tried by different situations; and the position of an English Churchman of the Anglo-Catholic school, courted by the various claims and agencies of Rome, seems in many respects peculiarly fitted to form and prove this part of the Christian character: much more so than the converse position,—that of a Roman Catholic beginning to suspect that there may be a reality in the English Church.

This statement does but assume what opponents in general would be eager to grant: viz. that to a romantic imaginative mind at least, the Roman claims stand out in a very obvious manner, and the English deficiencies are quite confessed and palpable. “Yours,” they will tell us, “undeniably is the poor, the homely, the unattractive side of the alternative. Who would wish, if he could choose, to be a member of a smaller and comparatively disunited body, instead of the largest and most compact of Christian communities; to be doubtful where others feel certain? Who would not have God’s Saints, and their miracles, disclosed to Him, rather than regard them as so many unrevealed mysteries? Who would not possess rather than want an entire and definite system of doctrine, and a poetical ritual, extending through all parts of

life? Who, if he could help it, would acknowledge such as the Tudor monarchs and their favourites, as framers in any sense of the religious system he lives under?" In these and many more instances, which Roman Catholics are never tired of alleging, let it be granted that we stand, *prima facie*, in a position, more or less humiliating: I say, that to acquiesce in it, because it is providentially our own position,—to be dutiful and loyal amid the full consciousness of it,—savours of the same kind of generous contentment, as the not being ashamed of lowly parentage, nor unloving towards a dull monotonous home.

Next, as to intellectual modesty: if in any case it is an appalling task to exercise private judgment on sacred things, this surely is such a case: whether one considers the habits of thought in which a person should be trained and prepared for the inquiry, or the variety and extent of information required, or the infinite moment of the conclusions on either side, and the startling nature of some of them; or finally, the weight and number of conflicting authorities. Well may the judge in such a cause cry out with the Prophet of old, "How can I alone bear the cumbrance and the burthen and the strife?"

For see, first, what is involved in the conclusion, when a person trained in Greece or in England gives in his name to the Church of Rome. It is deciding on his own authority what are the limits

of the Kingdom of Christ, what the evangelical terms of salvation. He is pronouncing not only on the truth, but on the importance also, of the many and various propositions, which being in debate among those who call themselves Catholics, are settled under anathema by the Roman councils. He is consigning millions, who had no other thought than to live and die true subjects of the visible Catholic Church, to the comparatively forlorn hope of incurable ignorance and uncovenanted mercy. He is doing all this, I say, on his own authority: for although he may declare that he does but accept the Church's word for each doctrine, this will not make him the less responsible for taking on himself to determine, *what* is the Church,—*whose* word he will accept. If a child go out of his way to choose a physician for himself, is he not accountable for each separate direction, otherwise than he would have been, had he trusted his parents to choose for him?

Imagine how a person would feel, were he challenged solemnly to sign, *on his own private judgment*, such a document as the Creed of St. Athanasius, or the Nicene Creed with its Anathema, and to venture his salvation upon it. In the infinitely varying contingencies of human duty,—of the pastoral care, especially,—such a step might possibly be needed, but who would not ask overwhelming proof of its necessity? Who would not shrink from it as an act of extreme

daring? And yet people can bring themselves to think and speak lightly of adhering to the Tridentine Creed on their own private judgment: a far bolder step, by how much the doctrines enforced are farther removed from the foundations of Christianity, the evidence of their universal and original reception less obvious, and the number greater of those whom they exclude from Christ's pale.

Further; supposing such a thing called for, one would rather expect the call to be something single, loud, and irresistible: such as might justify a private citizen in taking on himself to pull down half a city, in extremity of fire or siege. But the call here is the sum and result of at least two long and intricate discussions: the one abstract, on the nature and proper force of theological development; the other historical, whether the truths taught from the beginning have been duly developed in the Roman Church alone: discussions demanding great ingenuity and learning, and faculties trained or gifted for the most subtle and patient inquiry.

And as if on purpose to bring home to the conscience still more the boldness of the proceeding, Providence has caused to be gathered on both sides a host of great and holy names, the mere enumeration of which, one would think, might and must put down every thought of making one's self "a judge and divider over them."

Thirdly: whereas special circumspection is required in dealing with any rule or statement, which

may possibly lessen penitential shame for sins passed: we may well dread the Roman claims, so far as they withhold sacramental grace from our Church, were it only that they suggest such a ready plea to a conscience bent on extenuating its own sinfulness. To deny or doubt a man's baptism, is to help him to assuage his self-reproaching thoughts, with the notion that after all he has not grieved nor vexed the Holy Spirit: that his state has hitherto been that of a heathen; and his ill conduct comparatively excusable. It is a miserable fear, and a miserable consciousness which in part prompts it, yet unquestionably there is ground to fear, lest some of us be some day tempted to renounce our privileges, in the secret hope of lightening our account, or our penance. If the Enemy can once persuade us that our Baptism was but a shadow; that hitherto, being servants of sin, we were free from righteousness,—less expected of us in the way of obedience, and our faults more or less venial,—what will become of our contrition? It is the same snare in another form, which is found so attractive in the popular Lutheran perversion of the doctrine of Justification by Faith. The bare possibility of such a thing is plainly one call more for hesitation, in admitting a statement which involves that peril.

Again; the change of which I am speaking seems to put men in some especial danger of disparaging the fruits of the Holy Ghost, and of that which

the Apostle^d calls “rejoicing in iniquity;”—exulting over what evil they can find in their brethren. At least, so it would appear from recent experience. Nothing seems to have so long retarded those who have just now been passing away from us, as the apprehension they had of real sanctity in the Body which they were leaving. And no wonder: since by the act of leaving, they were also denouncing it as no part of the Body of Christ. Well might they pause on such a step, which, if wrongly hazarded, would not only prove an outrage on natural piety and affection, and an ungrateful rejection of the methods by which Divine Mercy had fed them all their life long unto this day, but would bring with it besides something profane and sacrilegious, akin to denying the grace of God in His Sacraments:—making out that to be human and ordinary, which was the especial and immediate work of the Holy Ghost.

I suppose there is no one of us, who thinks of such matters at all, but has known from his childhood, by experience or history or both, some one or more on whom he has depended, as the models of Christian goodness providentially thrown in his way, and specially appointed for himself to work by. Think of bringing one’s self to regard those very persons as no more than very good heathens, and their works as no portion nor fruit of the Un-

^d 1 Cor. xiii. 6. cf. Aristotle, Eth. Nicom. ii. vii. 15. on *ἐπιχαιρεκακία*.

speakable Gift! It seems almost like being forced to part altogether with our faith in sacramental grace, or in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Besides the profaneness, a glory would be departed, such as never could be replaced.

More especially in this case, where the change would be simply negative—a loss without any compensation. It is not that we are introduced to a fresh type of holiness, an order of Saints which before we knew not of; but whereas hitherto we were happy in believing that we were interested in all the Saints of the whole Church, we are now required to cast off all but the Roman. Not so in the opposite case. A Roman Catholic joining the English Communion has no occasion to conceive himself separated from the undeniable sanctity of the Church of Rome. There is nothing to prevent our acknowledging their Saints: there is much to make them slow and jealous in recognising any true holiness beyond their own border. And it is a great additional unhappiness, surely, for those who, with or without their own fault, are haunted with misgivings about the reality of our Church, that they are continually tempted to something like “rejoicing in iniquity:”—to grudging and disparaging thoughts of that, which after all may prove to have been the grace of God in their brethren. Sad exemplifications might be given of this, were it a subject which would bear dwelling upon.

But I rather pass on to the fifth and last-men-

tioned of the moral warnings, (so to call them,) which seem mysteriously to stand in men's way, as the Angel in Balaam's, when they would withdraw themselves from our Church : I mean, the amount of offence and scandal, quite inseparable from such a movement.

Most considerate persons know something of the grief and perplexity, if but one doubting thought flash across them in their devotions. Judge what it must be to have to answer, though it be for a single soul, haunted for whole years with the like waverings of imagination, every time it addresses itself to prayer.

But the pain and anxiety is the least part of the mischief. What shall we say, if some hasty step of ours, unsettling the principles of some weak brother, leave him either a sceptic for life, or drive him back, by a kind of reaction, into the cold uncatholic ways, the region where each man does what is right in his own eyes? What if we confirm the prejudices of the unbelieving world, and put a clue into her hand, whereby to entangle anew those who were just beginning to disengage themselves from her? What if we aid in setting an evil mark on primitive truths and counsels of perfection;—provoking persecution, discouraging novices, breaking the bruised reed, and quenching the smoking flax? One would not wish to write on such a subject from a mere overflow of feeling; one would rather be guilty of under than of over-

statement. But none of these perilous consequences are denied by those who would most wish to deny them. And being such as they are, and coming in addition to all that has been before enumerated, they surely do throw the burthen of proof with unusual force upon the side to which they adhere.

Is that side capable of sustaining the burthen? This is the third and most momentous step in our inquiry; not to be entered on but in fear and trembling, and under an urgent sense of duty: but so guarded, we may have good hope that it will not take us from the safe way. Here, however, the direct and obvious course is, by supposition, out of our power; I mean, the detailed examination of the controversy, balancing the arguments on each point. This, I say, our hypothesis excludes, as a task requiring extraordinary endowments; our endeavour all along being to provide for average cases. Ways, however, of tolerable satisfaction are open, if men will be content with such certainty as the matter allows, and not require absolute instead of practical demonstration.

Thus, we might survey some one branch of the subject; the more comprehensive the better, provided it were manageable; and judge of the whole by the result in that instance. Take the Supremacy, or Purgatory, or the worship of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints; remembering all

along that the question is not simply of the truth of what is taught, and the dutifulness of what is done, but of its necessity as a condition of Church communion. Is the evidence in either case of that overwhelming amount, which leaves no material scruple in a fair mind? and ought it to be less, if it is to sweep away all the moral difficulties just now enumerated? Is it not mainly made up of subtle inferences, philosophical, historical, or grammatical, from premisses more or less ambiguous and obscure? so that we long to close the discussion, instinctively certain, that this cannot be the sort of process, intended to counteract so many of our best feelings.

Or we might take the broad undeniable facts of the dispensation, as stated by the Roman Catholic writers themselves, and see how they correspond with the known dealings of Providence, in cases alleged as analogous.

For example: one of the principal difficulties which haunt thoughtful Anglicans in the present state of things, is the contrast between what they really find, and what they seem encouraged, in Scripture and Antiquity, to expect. The Church should be one; but to us the present Church seems palpably and incurably divided. The Church should be a guide; but by us the present Church is hardly felt to be such in several important points. And persons are tempted hastily to conclude, either that the promises have failed, or that we are not in the Church.

And certainly I would not deny, that both the Prophecies of the Old Testament, and those of our Lord Himself in His farewell discourse with His Disciples, and also the general tone of Church writers and aspect of Church affairs in the first and best times, would lead to the expectation of something very different from what we now see; something more like what the Roman Church claims for herself. I say, more like what she *claims*; for it would be begging the question to affirm the justice of her claim, or to maintain that even at first sight a primitive Christian would not be startled at the aspect of the Latin as of other sections of the Church. On first impressions, we might well anticipate that he would find something new and astonishing in the Supremacy, in the adoration of the Virgin, in image worship, and in the doctrine of Purgatory, as each of those tenets is now popularly developed. But I waive that portion of the argument, and suppose for the present that the general face of things at Rome has more of the air and outward habiliments of the system described in the Bible, than can be found elsewhere; and thereupon I ask, Is it safe, in interpreting Prophecy, to be guided mainly by such anticipations, how natural soever?

I think, that the analogy of God's dealings with men in former times would lead us to expect a less obvious fulfilment, to be recognised rather by a trusting, resolute faith, than by a searching,

comprehensive, historical intellect. For instance, Canaan seemed to be promised to the Patriarchs themselves^a: there was something, to human sense, disappointing, in its not being won till after many generations. How completely did the predictions to the house of David appear to man's judgment as if they failed^b! how eminently is it the work of faith to see that they are realized in our Lord! And to take the greatest instance of all, what a disappointment was that of the whole Jewish nation, the lowly Apostles alike and the haughty Priests, when they were told the true meaning of the Old Testament in its sayings concerning Christ's kingdom! a disappointment in which even now both Jews and many Christians (so far perhaps Judaizing) seem almost entirely to sympathize. Is it not possible that the Roman Catholic exposition of the same Scriptures may partake of the same error? It surely seems to depend very much upon certain outward circumstances, which however striking to the imagination, are rather particular forms and embodiments of the great idea of Unity, than inseparable parts of the idea itself. I allude to such details as the correspondence of Jerusalem with Rome, of the succession of the Popes with that of the kings of Judah, of pilgrimages and appeals with the resort of God's people to His city. It were much to be wished, that those who

^a Gen. xiii. 15—17; Acts vii. 5.

^b Ps. lxxxix. 49.

are attracted by these and other like obvious external points of unity in the Roman Catholic Church, would soberly endeavour to analyse their own impressions. They would find, perhaps, that they are influenced in a far greater degree than they imagine by considerations such as I have now specified, political rather than theological or devotional; after which if they go, doing violence to their moral instinct, what is it but taking Christ by force, and making Him an earthly King?

I will hazard another and a very obvious remark, on the general state of the whole controversy; namely, that the Roman view, to be fully convincing, ought to apply to the other notes of the Church as well as to its Unity and Visibility. No doubt, in respect of those two marks, the theory in question answers more literally to the Prophecies, than does the Anglican, which I suppose to be also the Greek theory. The Papal Monarchy unquestionably exhibits to the eye an Unity of government more entire than can be found in the rest of Christendom. But how is it when we come to the note of Sanctity? Is not Rome obliged to demand on the whole the same allowances as the other parts of Christendom are, when such texts as the following are to be considered? "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." "Thy people also shall be all righteous." "Violence shall no

more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders^c.”

Again, in respect of Universality ; wide and large as her Communion is, it does not as yet by a great deal come up literally to the prophetic promises ; such as, “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Such words as those cannot of course be pleaded for her, just as they stand. A certain approximation to their meaning is all that she can allege : enough and to spare for faith in her as *a* real Church, but hardly enough to satisfy a sober-minded person, whose duties have hitherto lain elsewhere, that she alone is *the* real Church.

Now, if Roman Christians may fairly claim this kind of allowance, in their explanation of those texts, which make Sanctity and Universality notes inseparable of the true Church ; why may not similar allowance be granted to English or Greek Christians, concerning the note of Unity also ? What law of Providence is there, what declaration of holy writ, what clear tradition of antiquity, to warrant our expecting that the Church shall be always visibly One, in another and more exact sense than that in which she shall be visibly Holy ? If the one attribute may be obscured and doubtful, in a greater or less degree, for a longer or a shorter time, why not the other also ?

* See also Ps. lxxii. 7 ; Isaiah xi. 6—9 ; xxxii. 1—5, 15—18 ; xxxv. 8, 9 ; lxxv. 25. Ezek. xxxv. 25. &c.

But it is feared that in this way men lose the promises of guidance and instruction, such as, "My Spirit and My words shall not depart out of thy mouth:" and, "He will guide you into all truth^d." And it is surmised, that without perfect visible unity of government, we might listen in vain after an authoritative voice, to secure well-meaning souls from ruinous error.

But first, it is surely a material consideration, which has constantly been urged in this controversy, and has never, that I know of, met with a satisfactory answer, How far the promises to the Church, like those to individuals, are conditional:—her more external privileges dependent on her inward and spiritual privilege of sanctity.

In the next place, defect of guidance in essentials is no *necessary* consequence of simple disunion in the Church. A different result is at least conceivable. It is conceivable, that before the time of disunion, events had been so providentially ordered, that all truths and practices generally necessary to salvation were sufficiently established in the rule of the whole Church, and that, in all such matters, the several portions continued to agree. Such agreement, being notorious and unquestionable, might be ascertained by any, even

^d This latter promise, by the way, seems at least as inconsistent with the notion of imperfect developement of fundamentals in Apostolical times, as with that of possible error touching truths of a secondary order in after times.

the simplest Christian ; by a process similar to that, whereby a Roman Catholic (for example) ascertains the voice of his own Church.

Now a very large proportion indeed of any Churchman's faith, be he Greek, Roman, or English, is made up of these common elements : much larger than any of us, perhaps, would imagine, until he had considered the thing in detail : and I say again, It is surely conceivable, that in it may be providentially contained all things necessary to salvation : and if so, then the promises about guidance are really fulfilled to the divided Church ; and that, in the same unexpected, and as one may say, indirect manner, which seems generally to have characterized the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies.

It may illustrate what is meant, if I put a case, which some Roman Catholics themselves, perhaps, will feel to be not undeserving of attention. For considerable portions of time, sometimes for two generations together, the Mediæval Western Church has been divided. There have been Anti-Popes—rival pretenders to that throne, which in its distinct visibility claims to be the sole sufficient guarantee of the continuance of Christ's kingdom on Earth. How was a plain Christian to know which of the claimants he should adhere to ? What became of those, many or few, who with no fault of their own adhered to the wrong claimant ? Where, during all that time, was the infallible

unquestionable guidance? What was the duty of persons finding themselves providentially in communion with one of the claimants, and coming to know that there was a doubt, but conscious that they were unable to balance the authorities, and solve that doubt for themselves?

It seems as if the answers to these questions, *mutatis mutandis*, might help us not a little in coming to a right practical sense of our own position and duty. Suppose a Roman Catholic should say that all necessary truths and rules having been settled before such schism commenced, a simple believer adhering to them was safe, even though he might be, innocently on his part, out of communion with the true successor of St. Peter: I suppose he might also add, that God's watchful Providence protected both sections of the Church against disagreement in fundamentals, during the period of their estrangement; so that although externally divided, they were in His sight One, and the means of grace and salvation might be had in both.

If thus much be granted, (I know not whether it would be, but if it were,) how is not our principle conceded? For surely the mere length of time is not essential in this case. It is just as conceivable that nine as that two generations of believers might live and die in such comparative disadvantage. The one no more implies failure in the Church, or a breach of the promises, than the

other. By whatever process the word of Scripture was fulfilled, to any faithful man "willing to do God's will," and desiring so to "know of the doctrine," in a time when the chair of St. Peter was disputed, by the same or a similar process it may be fulfilled to us.

It was of course impossible, then, for ordinary persons to decide between those claimants; for how could they ascertain the facts of an election, or settle the disputed points of ecclesiastical law? They could but abide in the Communion wherunto God's Providence had called them, desiring and hoping to be in the Catholic Church. And is not this just an account of the duty of the same sort of persons under the present sad division of Christendom? The disputed points are waiting for a general Council to settle them. That final and supreme authority of the Church is for a time, providentially, in abeyance. We go on appealing to it, and in the mean time submitting our judgment to that portion of the apparent visible Church, wherewith, by God's appointment, we are in Communion.

The more I consider the promises of Holy Writ, directed as they are more especially to the meek and humble and trembling of heart, the more hope do I seem to feel that they may be addressed to persons in our condition, at least as consistently with their letter and spirit, as when they are taken in that more outward and palpable sense, which

Roman Catholics attribute to them. And if there is but a fair probability that such may be the case, then on Bishop Butler's principle,—rather I will say, on the principle which our Great Father has ordained to guide His children in practical matters,—it must be better for each person, and in the end, doubtless, more conducive to the unity of the Church, for English Catholics to “abide in the calling wherein they are called;” overcoming, for faith and charity's sake, the temptation to seek elsewhere more certainty, and a more satisfactory systematical kind of knowledge: whereof the one seems rather too like “requiring a sign,” the other, like “seeking after wisdom,” in that spirit which the Apostle reproved.

Again: according to Roman Catholic statements, an analogy might be supposed between our case, and that of an Israelite of old invited to Christianity. What then was the sort and amount of testimony, which it pleased God to vouchsafe to those whom He called to so great a change?

By allowance of all but infidels, no Jew could be more certain of the divine origin of the system in which he was trained, than we are of those portions of Christianity which we hold in common with the Roman Church. We seem to ourselves to have, at least, as complete evidence of our relation to Christ, as the Jews had of their interest in the God of their Fathers. Our circumstances (if it may be reverently said) require more abundant proof than

theirs: inasmuch as we are called on to renounce and disavow a great deal, they only to build on what they had before.

But what is the fact? While to them was given every mark of supernatural interference, we are left to such comparisons as our own and others' ingenuity and learning can supply. With them it was submission to a voice from Heaven: with us it must be either reasonings and feelings of our own, or acquiescence in those of a guide whom we choose for ourselves. If we were sure that we might reason at all from their case to ours, the obvious inference would be, that God willed us rather to refrain from that, which when He would have done, He signified His purpose so irresistibly. The comparative want of evidence would strengthen the impression which the moral difficulties had left.

Another broad and obvious way of considering the question would be, to compare the acknowledged difficulties of the Roman and English theories, and observe which are in fact most analogous to those, wherewith the general truths of all religion are beset.

The Anglican theory of Church Unity may perhaps be stated, sufficiently for our present purpose, as follows: That our Lord left His Apostles to be collectively the centre of union to His Church, so that Communion with them in Faith and Sacraments should be for ever the

visible pledge of Church membership: That this Communion is secured by the gift of the Apostolical Succession, and of those truths and ordinances, of which it is notorious, that they were acknowledged as primitive and essential by the undivided Church: That the *being* of our Lord's Kingdom being thus secured, the collective authority of the Apostles' Successors is requisite, and is sufficient, to make for its *well-being* laws of universal obligation: But that this authority, for the sins and divisions of Christendom, having been for many centuries under suspension, and visible unity interrupted, we can but go on, as was said before, each one in obedience to the portion of the Church in which his own lot has been cast, under appeal to the governing body in respect of any debated points: And so we are preserved, though not in visible, yet as we may hope in real mystical union.

Of the gravest and most obvious objection to this view, I mean, its seeming inconsistency with the Prophecies, something has been already said. In addition, we may consider that the scriptural images, by which the unity of the Church is familiarly set forth, are such as rather to suggest than exclude this idea. All, whether Churches or individuals, must be branches of the same Tree; but a tree may have suckers; there may be an unseen, underground unity. We must be all streams from the same Fountain, but part of our course may have been out of sight. We must

be all sheep of the same flock, but the flock may have been more or less scattered. We must be all members of the same Body, but the healthful circulation may be more or less obstructed. We must be all subjects of the same kingdom, but there may be a disputed succession.

Adverting in particular to this last analogy; does not the constitution of the Jewish people cause us to think of a federal government, rather than of a monarchy, as likely to be realized in its antitype? Throughout the far greater part of its existence, such was undoubtedly the form of its unity: the Council of Elders bore sway: the longing for a king was deprecated as a degenerate feeling: and although at times, in default of kingly power, every man did that which was right in his own eyes, we are no where told that the commonwealth of Israel had therefore ceased to exist.

For aught that appears at first sight, the notion of each Bishop's independency, sometimes called Cyprianic, may be as legitimate a development of the original Apostolical idea, as the notion of the whole Episcopate, or Apostolate, providentially gathered into a single see. The danger in the one case, of indefinite disunion, is not *a priori* greater than the danger in the other, of continued exaggeration and corruption. If you say, there is supernatural security in the promise through St. Peter, applying it to the Roman see; why may we not as well apply that promise, as

St. Cyprian seems to have done, to the whole Episcopate? And if this be called an unreal, unpractical view, inasmuch as the Papacy has been acting in great power for many ages, while the government by co-ordinate Bishops has existed (they say) but in theory: such a statement takes for granted one of the main points in question:—that when appeals became necessary, they were always, as of right, made to Rome: whereas at first view it certainly would appear that for many hundred years unity and truth were preserved under the other, or federal constitution.

Neither would the loyal and affectionate sense of union be at all impaired by such an arrangement; if one may judge at least by analogy from terrestrial commonwealths. Where shall we find a country where national sympathies take up more of men's hearts than in Germany? Yet in Germany for many years there has been no unity of government; but language and race have proved more powerful to bind than political institutions to separate. Why should it be thought incredible among us, that Divine grace may work a like brotherly feeling in the separated portions of the Church? Since in God's ear they speak all the same language, and they all belong to the same holy family, their mutual estrangements need not have annulled all the privileges of their new birth.

Our Scripture difficulties being thus disposed of, those which arise from natural anticipation, pre-

vious to Scripture, are plainly referable to the same class as those for which solutions are provided in the second part of the Analogy. It may be well to make this evident by taking some of Butler's own statements, only with the substitution of the special terms of the present argument for his general ones.

For example^e: "Since, upon experience, the [general course of Church history] is found to be greatly different from what, before experience, would have been expected; and such as, men fancy, there lie great objections against: this renders it beforehand highly credible, that we may find the [course providentially recommended in a particular emergency of that history], very different from expectations formed beforehand; and liable, in appearance, to great objections."

The whole of the well-known passage concerning Inspiration plainly holds good in favour of a probable Tradition, as against a special sensible guidance on the one hand, and Papal Infallibility on the other^f. "We are wholly ignorant . . . how far, or in what way, God would interpose, to secure [Church Principles] being transmitted to posterity. We are equally ignorant, whether the evidence of them would be certain, or highly probable, or doubtful: or whether all who should have any degree of instruction from them, and any degree of evidence of their truth, would have the same. . . .

^e p. 236. Ed. 1791.

^f p. 238.

Nay, we are not in any sort able to judge, whether it were to have been expected that the [mind of the Church] should have been committed to writing; or left to be handed down, and consequently corrupted, by verbal tradition, and at length sunk under it, if people so pleased, and during such time as they are permitted, in the degree they evidently are, to act as they will." How does this way of speaking suit with the sentiment, that an Infallible Guide must needs be given, because we cannot see how the truth can be otherwise preserved? or with that other sentiment, "I walk by my own private judgment, but I know I cannot be far wrong, because I have prayed?"

Again^s, "The only question [for an English Churchman] concerning the [Church of England] is, whether it be a real [branch of the Church]; not, whether it be attended with every circumstance which we should have looked for: and concerning the [Prayer Book,] whether it be what it claims to be; not, whether it be a book of such sort, and so promulged, as we might be apt to fancy a [perfect form of solemn worship] should." I cannot help thinking that dissatisfied and critical spirits would find much rest, and be saved much temptation, if they would resolve simply to go on in the spirit of these obvious cautions, when they are examining questions relating to their own Church, even as, no doubt, they are used

^s p. 240.

to do in dealing with objections against the Gospel itself.

Again^h, “The [English theory] represents the Church as [partly] in a state of [decay,] and [offers our system, especially the Prayer Book, as a help against further decay.] Is it credible,” the objector asks, “that so many [centuries] should have been let pass, before a matter of such sort, of so great and so general importance, was made known to [Christendom ;] and then that it should be known to so small a portion thereof? Is it conceivable that this [help] should be so very deficient, should have so much obscurity and doubtfulness?” [being pleaded with equal confidence by two contradictory schools :] “should be liable to as gross perversions,” [by State interference, by admission of heretics to Communion, and the like,] “in short,” (let it be so stated for the argument’s sake,) “lie open to as serious objections,” [although, it may be, on the opposite side,] “as the [unreformed system] itself?”

Thus far the objector : now hear the Bishop’s reply. “Without determining how far this in fact is so, I answer ; it is by no means incredible that it might be so, if [the course of nature and the providential career of the Church] be under the same Hand. . . . Remedies existing in nature for diseases, have been unknown to mankind for many ages : are known but to few now : probably many valuable

^h p. 249.

ones are not known yet. Great has been and is the obscurity and difficulty, in the nature and application of them. Circumstances seem often to make them very improper, where they are absolutely necessary. It is after long labour and study, and many unsuccessful endeavours, that they are brought to be as useful as they are; after high contempt and absolute rejection of the most useful we have; and after disputes and doubts which have seemed to be endless. The best remedies too, when unskilfully, much more if dishonestly, applied, may produce new diseases; and with the rightest application, the success of them is often doubtful. In many cases, they are not at all effectual: where they are, it is often very slowly; and the application of them, and the necessary regimen accompanying it, is, not uncommonly, so disagreeable, that some will not submit to them; and satisfy themselves with the excuse, that if they would, it is not certain whether it would be successful. And many persons, who labour under diseases, for which there are known natural remedies, are not so happy as to be always, if ever, in the way of them. In a word, the remedies which nature has provided for diseases are neither certain, perfect, nor universal. And indeed the same principles of arguing, which would lead us to conclude that they must be so, would lead us likewise to conclude, that there could be no occasion for them; that is, that there could be no diseases at all."

Will not all this apply to the supposed failure of the English Reformation, when alleged as a reason for renouncing the present English Church ?

Again, the sixth chapter of the same part of the treatise, dealing with the objections supposed to arise from the want of universality in revelation, and from the supposed deficiency in the proof of it, seems even to apply itself, as we read, to our own imputed defects of catholicity and infallibility. "The weakness of these opinions may be shewn, by observing the suppositions on which they are founded : which are really such as these ; that it cannot be thought God would have bestowed any favour at all upon us, unless in the degree which, we think, He might, and which, we imagine, would be most to our particular advantage : and also that it cannot be thought He would bestow a favour upon any, unless He bestowed the same upon all : suppositions which we find contradicted, not by a few instances in God's natural government of the world, but by the general analogy of nature togetherⁱ."

Passages of like application might be indefinitely multiplied : I wish those were less appropriate, which speak of a certain scornfulness, but too natural to eager and unguarded minds, fresh from deciding on hard questions : and not least discernible, perhaps, in those who have been led to take the Roman side in this present contro-

ⁱ p. 297.

versy. But these citations may be enough to shew, that the analogies from nature, and from former revelation, do not tell so unquestionably against our position, as to dispense with the need of direct evidence, abundant and overpowering, to make it untenable.

One might conceive such a preponderance of authorities, among those who might be supposed capable of deciding on that evidence, as in all reason ought to satisfy those, who know themselves to be incapable. But neither does our case supply this. Good and wise men—for aught that appears, equally good and wise men^k,—are found equally earnest and persevering on the one side as on the other. There is no appearance, as though in proportion to their sanctity, either English or Roman Catholics felt ordinarily any tendency to give up their hereditary views. Three centuries have now passed, and converts having authority are yet very few. A fact which tells more strongly, perhaps, on the English side than on the Roman, inasmuch as we know that the great instructors of our Church had the claims of Rome distinctly before them,

^k If any one is moved by the present want of regular canonization in the English Church: first, this no more evinces a comparative defect of real holiness, than the omission of individual names (Kempis, for example) from the Roman Calendar, disproves their inward sanctity in the sight of God; secondly, adherence to the Tridentine Creed involves condemnation of the Greek Church also, which has all along claimed and exercised the right of canonizing.

but with Roman Saints and Doctors, for many reasons, the Anglican view had far less chance to be considered. It came on them, generally, from a greater distance : for so it is, that few of them, if any, were our countrymen, or resident among us. To master our theory, therefore, was very seldom their special duty : it was natural for them to slight it altogether, as a dreamy, unreal kind of thing.

On the whole, authorities being as they are ;— analogies, whether of Scripture or Experience, readily coming into view, whereby the objections to our case may be met ; and the details of the controversy not being manageable without more than usual subtlety and learning :—ordinary inquirers seem fairly thrown back on the moral difficulties before alleged : and what can the result be, but patient continuance in our providential calling ?

But it will be said, “ You are proving too much. All, or nearly all this, tells as strongly for Roman Catholics, as for English Catholics, remaining in their present Communion.” And supposing this granted, for argument’s sake—as it is not, to us, an immediate practical topic—the objector might go on : “ Each one then is to abide in the religious condition in which he finds himself. At this rate, how are heretics, or even unbelievers, to be converted ? what chance remains of healing the

Church's divisions? what becomes of all the great sayings, such as *Magna est veritas, et prævalebit?* are we not sacrificing truth to peace, divine doctrines to hereditary yearnings and impressions?"

Here then we come on the fourth head of our discussion: we have to shew, that what has been said is not transferable to the cases mentioned in the objection: that being granted, it still leaves us a solid and complete ground of dogmatical teaching: and that the hope of Church Union (humanly speaking) would not be diminished, but rather enlarged, by the general acceptance of our principles.

The matter may perhaps be simplified by referring to a passage in St. John's Gospel, which contains a sort of classification of all religions. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the privilege of becoming sons of God." The first of these three verses seems to represent the condition of Heathens and Unbelievers; the second of Jews, Mahometans, and Heretics; the third of Christians properly so called, i. e. Catholics.

Now as to the first, those who know not their Maker, the principle of "the safe way" is at once applicable to them, because in conversion they give up nothing, and have a chance of gaining eternity.

With respect to those to whom Christ has come, but they have not yet received Him : the mass of testimony given in the first place to the Jews, and now made present to all Christians by the constant tradition of the Church warranting the Scriptures, is *prima facie* sufficient to overbalance such moral difficulties as may beset them.

For in their case is no discontent nor ingratitude ; they are not called on to give up any thing, but only to add to what they have : the Jew, who has always looked to Christ, to believe that He is already come ; the Mahometan and Unitarian, to believe in His Divine Nature ; the Rationalist, in our supernatural communion with Him. They are not, like English Churchmen, invited to disavow what they have all along accounted a real and living participation in God the Word made Man for them.

Again ; in neither of those cases are men invited, as we are, to trust their own *a priori* reasoning. All is testimony, overpowering testimony ; first, that such and such miracles were wrought, such and such sufferings undergone ; next, that this is the morality, this the doctrinal and sacramental system, in behalf of which it was all done and suffered. The sense of undivided Christendom on all these great points is so notorious, that to acquiesce therein is not reliance on, but submission of, our own understandings.

As to the deep sense of sins past : one who has

never yet believed himself a living member of Christ, cannot well experience the same fear and shame as he who has been all along taught what God has done for him. Conversion therefore from any form of rationalism to the Church need not bring with it any such check to contrition, as would naturally be occasioned by disavowal of our part in the Church.

You go, for example, to a Baptist, and urge him to conform. He cannot say that he is tempted to do so, in part, by the hope of ridding himself of bitter remembrances of post-baptismal sin. For it was never any tenet of his, that post-baptismal sin has any special aggravation. But had he thought himself before in such sense a member of Christ, that his unchristian doings had on them that peculiar mark of evil, which Catholics recognise, then he might feel a sort of relief, in being told that his membership had hitherto been but imaginary.

The same kind of remark might be made as to the degree in which he was separating himself from good persons in his former communion, and disparaging their goodness. How has he been used to judge of that goodness in times past? He has counted it, most truly of course, a special token from God's sanctifying Spirit, vouchsafed (as he thinks) upon the act of our believing in Christ as our Saviour. He has not counted it, as supposing himself Catholic he would have done, a regular

fruit of the Free Unspeakable Gift, vouchsafed in Baptism on our being made members of Christ:—the work not so much of the believer himself, as of Christ abiding in him. In that case, he must have been content to lower his estimate of it. But now nothing hinders, but that he may still think of it as he did; as of a token of mercy overflowing, an extraordinary favour, over and above the settled dispensation of Grace.

Much in the same way as (it has been observed) the Rationalist ought not to think himself wronged by our denying the reality of his sacraments, since we allow him still as much as he claims himself,—edification, comfort, order, and the like:—so it is in this case. In joining the Church from any Protestant body, a man does not give up the claim of sacramental and supernatural holiness on the part of the communion which he leaves. For why? such claim was never at all alleged. In joining the Roman Church from the English or the Greek, he plainly does deny and disavow the same. This is a great and a startling difference.

Lastly, as to giving offence, no doubt there is risk of it in every change of received opinions and conduct; risk of perplexing the simple, encouraging the presumptuous, and promoting a general scepticism. But the danger is mitigated, as the conviction assailed is less. To give up opinions is not like sacrificing principles. Private theories and interpretations are not so shocking to part with, as

Church Formularies. Individuals are disturbed by the one, by the other whole nations and races. And what is more especially to be remarked, the very atmosphere of those bodies which do not profess and call themselves Catholic, is pervaded, avowedly so, by the elements of change. So that a movement towards something fixed, though it be a movement, tends on the whole to stability.

As the moral objections to change are less, so the positive *prima facie* reasons for it are far more overpowering, when we deal with Dissenters, than when Roman Catholics are dealing with us. The very axiom which we begin with, "Universal consent among Christians is moral demonstration," is denied by Dissenters: they must deny it, in order to hold their own at all. But being once received, it tells so unquestionably for a visible Church, for sacramental grace, for government by succession from the Apostles, and perhaps for some other kindred points; that it may well seem intended to overrule far greater moral difficulties than any which stand in its way.

One case, that which perhaps is most frequently alleged against us—the case of the Donatists—is at once disposed of by the very obvious reflection, so often adduced, and not least forcibly of late, that the Unity of the Church is by no means visible to us, in the same sense that it was to the contemporaries of St. Augustine. It is matter of reason or of faith, not of sight, in the countries

where only, for the most part, appeal to it is needed. Ask for *the* Church in England, and we know which way people will point. In Greek countries, the Roman Church will be popularly described, I suppose, as the *Latin* Church. These two facts go a good way against the application of St. Augustine's argument, to the ordinary use of the word Catholic among Protestants.

Indeed, in the present unhappy state of Christendom, one can scarce imagine a person changing his Communion merely for the sake of the old visible unity, without more or less of haunting scruple and distrust of his own choice: and where will he be then? He will still, as before, run the risk of having to fall back on the excuse of invincible ignorance for involuntary schism: but the position will now be one of his own choosing, and who can say how much difference that may make in it to the All-seeing Eye?

It would be another matter, if our faith in the Church of England caused us to anathematize other Churches, or to declare them in any sense aliens. Such a spirit, universal among us, would indeed be a sad token of something too like the old Novatianism or Donatism: God grant it may never prevail! But if it should, besides silencing our old divines, the Prayer Book must be made another book than it is: for at present it implies throughout, and asserts in its Preface to the Ordination Services, that we hold of antiquity through

the mediæval times: and therefore that Romans and Greeks, abiding as they were in those times, are still Catholics, and we in true communion with them; though the visible use of that communion (which God restore!) be in His just judgment suspended for a while.

Roman Catholic controversialists are fond of comparing this view with that of the more moderate Donatists, and of inferring that we are liable to St. Augustine's censures on them. They do not consider, (among other differences,) what a large portion of the "orbis terrarum," for many many generations past, we should have to anathematize on our own private judgment: whereas Donatism in St. Augustine's time was scarce a hundred years old, and reached but to a handful of men in a single province. And I suppose it would be true to say, that whenever Roman Catholics will prove the supremacy of the Pope with any thing like the same mass of authority and argument, as that by which St. Augustine proved the necessary imperfection of the visible Church, we will at once submit ourselves to him. Until then, the cases cannot be parallel.

This suggests the further remark, that our debates with the Roman Catholics turn more on matters of fact and detail, than on principles.

For example: we are no more minded than they, to set up the private judgment of an individual or a province, against that of the Church universal.

Only we require to be satisfied, before we affirm that the present Roman obedience is the whole Church.

Our minds are as open, we hope, as theirs, to the fearful mystery of post-baptismal sin : but we dare not take on ourselves to pronounce it necessary to salvation, that a person should receive the precise statements of the Roman Schools concerning Purgatory.

We receive as a principle every statement of Scripture and of the early undivided Church, on the Presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist : we hesitate in limiting those statements, on peril of men's souls, to that one only manner of presence which is called Transubstantiation.

We venerate the Blessed Virgin as most truly the Mother of God : and we know of no honour vouchsafed to any creature, at all comparable to that which she received at our Lord's Incarnation. Neither do we take on ourselves to limit the prerogatives, which the King of Saints may have assigned to those whom He delights to honour. But we dare not of our own authority decide that our Church has forfeited her being as a Church, by her censure passed on the particular system of mediation and tutelage which the Roman Church has countenanced¹.

¹ This example is not inserted without some painful hesitation. For if indeed the Church of Rome had authoritatively sanctioned the view, lately, alas ! understood to have been put forth in her

And so of other things : we feel all along that we have not set out from the beginning in opposite directions, nor do our courses tend continually to wider separation. It is no such violent imagination, to fancy ourselves re-united as of old, without any sacrifice of principle on either side. I say, of *principle* : because undoubtedly certain statements of fact, and applications of principle, would have to be waived or withdrawn.

Now, what is the result of such a feeling as this, on a modest and thoughtful mind ? Plainly to render a man more easily contented with his place ; more willing to hope and wait with patience, as having a right to reckon certainly upon a great

behalf:—the substance of which view appears to be, That some *one* among creatures *must* be preeminent above the rest ; that this *can* be no other than the Mother of God ; and therefore that as long as we account her less than God, we *cannot possibly* idolize her in a bad sense:—if this were part of the recognised Roman Creed, then by adhering to that Creed we should not only be acknowledging new facts, but also adopting new principles : and, *so far*, the argument in the text would not apply. Only in proportion to the strange and startling nature of those principles, and the right which they assume in us, *a priori*, of judging what must or must not take place in the world out of sight, it is plain that we should naturally look for very distinct and unanswerable proof. Amounting as they really would to an additional dispensation, over and above those of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, we might without presumption hope for the same kind of evidence, as was vouchsafed when the Gospel and the Church were revealed. But the comfort is, these antecedent grounds of the worship in question are not yet put forth by authority ; and most devoutly is it to be wished, that they never may be so: for they would set all our relations on a new footing, more hopeless, humanly speaking, than ever.

deal of unconscious sympathy, and virtual communion in Divine offices, on the part of those even who esteem themselves most alienated from him. But suppose the same person once made aware, that in order to stay where he is, he must contradict something which has been held as an axiom by the mass of believers from time immemorial ;—some rule, so to call it, of the common law of the Christian kingdom ;—this is surely another case altogether. The providential call on such an one to consider where he is, and why, becomes much more direct ; and the possible sacrifice, if as great or greater, yet more evidently worth making.

Consider next, how this bears on the obvious position of the several communities of Christians, apart from Rome, from Greece, and from England. The Donatists and Novatians of old, (to say nothing of grosser heresies,) avowedly denied the commission of the Church from the beginning, to remit or retain all sins. The Eastern Separatists, whether Nestorians or Jacobites, must feel that if they are right, the great visible Body of Christ has in all times been either undecided or wrong, on no less a point than the reality of our Lord's Incarnation. Again, (to omit for the present all other points,) the Lutheran and Reformed Continental Schools are themselves not slow to acknowledge, that their doctrine of Justification, though traceable, as they say, through considerable portions of Church history, has never been dominant, never universally enforced. These

surely are startling admissions: and whoever finds them irresistibly urged upon him, has a reason for suspecting what he has hitherto trusted in,—a reason other in kind than he would have had, were the tenets in dispute of the order before exemplified.

Neither does this reasoning lose its validity because of our shameful and lamentable disunion, and the free course of false doctrine within our walls, owing to the Church's want of means to enforce the Catholic sense of her formularies: unless it can be shewn, that bearing with an error is the same thing as enacting it, and lays the community chargeable with it under the same disadvantage: a canon which, according to Roman statements, would unchurch the three first centuries of Christendom, since we are told that during that whole time the very Godhead of Jesus Christ, or at least the doctrine of the most Holy Trinity, remained an undeveloped mystery; that views which virtually impugn it were left uncensured, and their promoters honoured as orthodox and holy men. If it was so indeed, and yet the Church of the Fathers continued without all question a true Church, why may not the Church of England continue a true Church also, notwithstanding her toleration of Puritans and other Rationalists within her borders?

Upon the whole, painful as many things are, the course marked out in the present distress, for a

sincere humble-minded Catholic in the Church of England, seems in no wise doubtful or obscure. Suppose him assailed by scruples from without or from within : let him not dare to indulge them in the least, until he has counted the whole cost,—how much heavier the burthen of changing, than of persisting in his providential station ; whom and what he is called to separate himself from ; what sort of persons he will grieve, what offences encourage ; in how many ways, which he can even now perceive, his spiritual dangers will be aggravated : besides the certainty that every such venture must be fraught with unforeseen evil of its own. Then let him survey, as any person of average good sense and information may easily do, the kind and amount of evidence brought to disturb him : let him compare it with what Providence has vouchsafed in cases said to be analogous. Finally, let him fairly ask himself, “ Is the result at all like moral demonstration ? and ought I, in this case, to be contented with less ? ”

I am persuaded that the moral difficulties, which have now been touched upon, would be generally felt by good minds as quite irresistible, but for that longing after assurance—perfect rest of mind and heart—which might perhaps not unaptly be called the “ last infirmity ” of saintly spirits. As the tender and anxious conscience is won by the expectation of some peculiar, untried repose, to be found in Roman Catholic confessionals only ; forgetting that

the same treasure of pardon is by God's mercy already within its reach : so the restless argumentative intellect thinks to take refuge in the doctrine of infallibility; not considering, that by a like effort we might as well, if so disposed, silence our scruples in continuing where God has placed us.

But why should imperfect beings, such as we are, depend on assurance of either kind? since even on Roman Catholic principles it is not to be expected on that very point, which concerns us more nearly than either, namely, our own final perseverance? A very few years' thoughtful experience will tell us, that a reasonable hope is in general far better than absolute certainty of good, for such beings as most of us are: more in unison with all around us: more conducive to steady improvement: more apt to form in us that resigned, humble character, that "mind of little children," to which all the promises are made. Scripture again, describing Faith not as full satisfaction of the intellect, but as *πραγμάτων ἔλεγχον οὐ βλεπομένων*—"making a venture on things unseen"—would seem to encourage a generous trust in that which it is our duty to love; and to discourage, as more or less selfish, all restless cravings for a more certain and systematic knowledge. A man cannot innocently overlook the risk of forsaking his appointed place, of condemning and unsettling others, for insufficient reasons: and personal assurance is clearly an insufficient reason;

as selfish, in its way, as domestic comfort, partial affection, or the wish to quiet importunity. At best, it is "doing evil that good may come:" and the assurance so gained, there is reason to fear, will prove more or less delusive.

Neither are providential hints wanting, especially calculated to keep us in our place at this time. The stir and movement for the better within our own walls, as if God had some especial work in store for us, has not quite passed away, as might have been feared. On the other hand, we have been made to see that even were we to submit ourselves to the Roman Church, we should not at once free ourselves of course from uncertainty. Looking at her system in an argumentative way, we should have to choose between the modern theory of Developement, and the more established theory of silent unrecorded Tradition. And again, in so practical a matter as our regular devotions, a doubting thought would be brought almost hourly before us, whether or no the Blessed Virgin Mary is the one Mediatrix of Prayer, in such sense, that to seek her intercession is as truly our duty, as to lean on the merits of her Son.

Again, to say nothing of other countries, what a fact is the present state of Ireland, in regard especially of the sixth Commandment, if we view it side by side with the many statements, whereby it is sought to propagate the notion of the surer and better working of the Roman system!

Surely, taking all into account, it is more scriptural, more analogous to God's ordinary moral government, aye, and more hopeful too, in the end, to suppose the whole visible Body shattered and decayed, than to claim perfection for one part, while we deny the very being of the rest.

It is true that this line of argument would lead Greek or Roman Catholics, as well as English, to shrink from all thoughts of separation^m; and that it would materially affect our own ways of speaking and judging of them and of their systems. It would take us continually back to the very foundation of our English theory: that those from whom we are separated are yet in the Church, since we inherit, as it were, through them. If so, they are nearer to us, every one of them, than any human relation can make them. We have a special duty of brotherly love towards them, over and above the general tribute, due to all men, of lenient and charitable judgment. If called on by sufficient authority to concur in words which sound harsh towards them, the nature of the case binds us to take those words in the lowest sense which honest interpretation will allow,

^m It is not, of course, meant that no combination of circumstances would justify a Roman Catholic, being such by inheritance, much more a penitent after hasty conversion, in conforming to the English Church; but only that it is in any case a very awful and momentous proceeding: so far, however, less painful and responsible than the act of an Anglican conforming to Rome, as it involves less of an Anathema on the Communion separated from.

and to make the most of all remaining sympathies and agreements, except where some special reason is shewn to the contrary. If such consideration be due (as all will allow) to those yet in communion with us (alas, how many!) who deny and disavow the Catholic meaning of our formularies: it is due no less to those, whose Creed is substantially the same with our own, though we may not worship together.

This is all self-evident, when men once understand the resemblance of our case to that of a divided family,—divided for a time by some error of their superiors:—relationship continuing, while intercourse is interrupted. And perhaps it applies not the less forcibly, when we recollect the special circumstances of the misunderstanding which originally parted us. Natural piety, too, would recommend the most guarded and respectful thoughts and words, seeing that the matters in controversy between us touch continually on the verge of most sacred and unquestionable truths, on which if a man discourse ignorantly, he can hardly fail to symbolize with heretics, and to disparage Saints and Fathers.

With these feelings, we need not, I trust, fear, lest in clinging dutifully to our own Church of England we lose our hold on the First and only True Church. While we forego some things, in themselves desirable, for charity's and obedience's sake, there remains yet a great body—enough,

if rightly improved, to fill out a whole life—of Catholic opinions, usages, and sympathies, wherein we may indulge without a shadow of offence. Here lies our true *Via Pacis*, and centre of unity: not to be found by eagerly pressing on to outward communion, but rather by praying for them and with them at a distance:—by acquiescing, so long as it shall please God, in the sentence (so to call it) of partial excommunication, which seems now for many centuries to have hung over each separate portion of our sinful and decayed Christendom. This, in God's counsels, may be the kind of unity intended for us, as best suiting our condition, and furthering our probation: an unity of faith, not of sight: an unity which, far from admitting any boastful contemplation of our privileges, cannot be imagined apart from the constant breathings of a lowly and penitent spirit.

May one be permitted (though most unworthy) to offer one concluding suggestion, which will surely be taken in good part by all kind readers of whatever section of the Church? It is this: That at one time or another in our daily devotions, we should offer up our Lord's Prayer, as a prayer, in special, for Church union; if so be He may graciously accept it, remembering His own Eucharistical petition, "THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, AS WE ARE."

Our Father, which art in Heaven, One God the Father Almighty, One Lord Jesus Christ, One

Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son ; have mercy upon us Thy children, and make us all one in Thee.

Hallowed be Thy Name : Thou Who art One Lord, and Thy Name One ; have mercy upon us all, who are called by Thy Name, and make us more and more one in Thee.

Thy kingdom come : O King of Righteousness and Peace, gather us more and more into Thy kingdom, and make us both visibly and invisibly one in Thee.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven : Thou Who hast declared unto us the mystery of Thy will, to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on earth : conform us, O Lord, to that holy will of Thine, and make us all one in Thee.

Give us this day our daily Bread : Thou in Whom we being many are one Bread and one Body : grant that we being all partakers of that one Bread, may day by day be more and more one in Thee.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us : Thou, Who didst say, *Father, forgive them*, for those who were rending Thy Blessed Body : forgive us the many things we have done to mar the unity of Thy mystical Body, and make us, forgiving and loving one another, to be more and more one in Thee.

And lead us not into temptation: As Thou didst enable Thine Apostles to continue with Thee in Thy temptations: so enable us by Thy grace to abide with Thee in Thy true Church under all trials, visible and invisible, nor ever to cease from being one in Thee.

But deliver us from evil: From the enemy and false accuser: from envy and grudging: from an unquiet and discontented spirit: from heresy and schism: from strife and debate: from a scornful temper, and reliance on our own understanding: from offence given or taken; and from whatever might disturb Thy Church, and cause it to be less one in Thee:

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Hursley,

Oct. 21, 1847.

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THE DUTY OF HOPING AGAINST HOPE.

Rom. iv. 18.

Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

POSTSCRIPT TO SERMON VIII.

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SERMONS,

ACADEMICAL AND OCCASIONAL.

SERMON I.^a

FAVOUR SHEWN TO IMPLICIT FAITH.

PSALM cxix. 99, 100.

I have more understanding than all my teachers; for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients; because I keep Thy precepts.

As experience widens and corrects our general views of human life, we are commonly not long in finding out, that the connection between success in any pursuit, and the talent of those employed in it, is by no means so invariable, as our first thoughts would lead us to anticipate. I am not now speaking only of our general liability to failure, how the best concerted schemes are from time to time unaccountably deranged: how after a time we “return, and see under the sun, that the race is not” always “to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill: but time and chance happeneth to them all.”

^a This and the two following Sermons were preached before the University of Oxford in the years 1822, 1823.

No doubt, there is much in this, which can no otherwise be accounted for, than by referring it to the control of a gracious, yet mysterious, Providence, which will not suffer man to depend for success upon himself, or upon any thing on this side the grave. Nevertheless, there is also much, which may in a good degree be explained, without lessening our awful sense of that ever-present control, by reference to certain general laws, according to which the present system of things, so far as it is within our comprehension, appears to be regulated.

One of these laws probably is, "That the common course of what affects human life should be more nearly adapted to the *average*^b capacity and condition of mankind, than to cases which rise much above or fall much below it^c." For example, those kinds of sustenance, which the great majority of animal frames most constantly require, are most widely diffused, and most easily obtained. In strict

^b Πίστewος γὰρ δέεται μόνης, (τὸ κήρυγμα) οὐ συλλογισμῶν· διὸ δὴ μάλιστα αὐτὸ θαυμάζειν ἄξιον· οὐχ ὅτι χρήσιμον καὶ σωτήριον μόνον, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ εὐκόλον, καὶ ῥᾶστον, καὶ τοῖς πᾶσιν εὐληπτον· ὃ δὴ μάλιστα τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ προνοίας ἔργον ἐστὶ, κοινὰ τὰ παρ' ἑαυτοῦ προτιθέντος ἅπασιν· ὅπερ γὰρ ἐπὶ ἡλίου, καὶ σελήνης, καὶ γῆς, καὶ θαλάττης, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐποίησεν, οὐ τοῖς μὲν πλουτοῦσι καὶ σοφοῖς πλείονος μεταδιδούς τῆς ἀπὸ τούτων χορηγίας, ἐλάττονος δὲ τοῖς πένησιν, ἀλλ' ἴσην ἅπασιν τὴν ἀπόλαυσιν προτιθεῖς, τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κηρύγματος εἰργάσατο· καὶ πολλῶ πλείον, ὅσῳ καὶ ἀναγκαϊότερον τοῦτο ἐκείνων. S. Chrys. in Rom. i. 13. t. 3. p. 15.

^c See the same kind of argument in Arist. Eth. i. 8. εἴη δ' ἂν καὶ πολύκοινον, κ. τ. λ.

accordance with this dispensation, we may observe, that, granting a certain degree of common sense, it is not great natural ability, so much as singleness of purpose, and perseverance in uniform and discreet labour, which determines, in the ordinary course of things, who shall succeed, and who fail, in their respective temporal objects. In commerce, a tendency to daring speculations, however skilful and well combined, cannot be so safely trusted as punctual and unswerving industry. In literature, though it were senseless to dispute the great advantage of superior ability, when united with persevering diligence; it is equally notorious, that supposing the two separated, more fatal errors by far against truth and sound reasoning have resulted from genius without application, than from the contrary character: understanding by the word "application," not study of any kind, but the patient bending of a man's powers towards the particular point in question, through a sincere desire of ascertaining the truth.

Now the text appears to point out an analogy, well worth observing, between these circumstances of common life, and what takes place in more important matters: in those, namely, which concern our everlasting welfare. "I have more understanding than my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my study: I am wiser than the aged, because I keep Thy commandments." These words are evidently uttered, not in the Psalmist's

own person alone, but in the person of every one, who has the privilege of knowing God and His law. And to one who lives within reach of the Gospel, being interpreted by experience and the rest of Holy Scripture, they will be found to speak some such language as this: That such honest attention and thoughtfulness as are in the power of all men, are not only necessary, but sufficient, by God's blessing, and the assistance of His Holy Spirit, to guide us into all truths really important to our final welfare;—not only to make us virtuous rather than vicious, but also to make us Christians rather than Infidels, orthodox Christians rather than Heretics, and conforming Christians rather than Schismatics.

So much of this position, as relates to the ordinary dealings of life, will not, I suppose, seem questionable to any one, who acknowledges the Bible, as a rule of conduct, at all. But, when we come to extend it to matters of religion, as distinguished from matters of morality—to supernatural, as opposed to social, duties—a little explanation may be required, lest we seem to derogate, needlessly and untruly, from the value of high intellectual endowments: which must ever rank among the most precious of the talents committed to our charge in this world. It is not, then, meant to be denied, that original genius, even though destitute of the singleness of purpose, here insisted on, is usually more successful in the discovery of new truths, and

in enlarging the field of argument, than the most blameless and unrelaxing diligence alone. But then those truths are almost sure to be mixed up with so much of error and paradox—to be so far overstated and misapplied for display's sake, for the pleasurable exercise of ingenuity, and many other temptations, against which nothing but strict Christian self-control can secure us—that the chances are, on the whole, for their doing more harm than good to the discoverer: perhaps also to the world at large, unless the same topics be afterwards taken up by some mind of a different stamp, more sober and less ambitious. To those, who are versed in the history of theology, abundance of examples will readily suggest themselves. And as the usefulness, even of newly-discovered truths, must depend in a great measure upon something besides the ability of the discoverer: so in the more ordinary, but more momentous, branch of theology—the confirmation and application of familiar truths—patience, simplicity, and diligence, are, comparatively, all in all. These must choose our course aright, and ensure perseverance in it: without which, mere velocity and energy would only take us farther wrong. Just as a traveller, without a compass, the faster and more fearlessly he goes, will but lose himself the more entirely in the mazes of an Indian forest.

Now, the only sure clue or compass, to us, is that which the text suggests. Let a man stedfastly

purpose, in all things, and more particularly a man of genius in all his intellectual pursuits and pleasures, to give up his own will to the will of his Maker ; and then not only the written word of God, but all the means, of which He on various occasions variously avails Himself, to make known His will to mankind, will become “ a lamp unto” such a person’s “ feet, and a light unto his paths :” will help him to see that will more clearly, and to do it more steadily.

This, as matter of fact, is what every Christian owns. But since, as matter of practice, the acknowledgment seems very imperfect : and those even, who are, to a certain degree, sincere, seem afraid to follow the truth in this matter, as far as in consistency they ought ; it may be of use to analyse (if I may so speak) the phænomenon itself, which we have been endeavouring to exhibit ; to point out, briefly, how it comes to pass, that depth and originality of intellect—that faculty, whose peculiar office is the discovery of truth—should in the discovery of practical truth be of far less consequence, than the moral qualities of candour and attention, perseverance and self-control.

Now if we were to lay down, in one word, what it is which most certainly warrants the hope of success in any particular art or undertaking, I suppose it would be tolerably correct to say, that it is “ having a taste for it.” That expression seems to imply, both a right understanding of the end, which such art or undertaking has in view ; and also a

real and hearty desire to attain that end : such a desire, as implies real and lasting uneasiness in not attaining it.

There may be, it is undeniable, great proficiency, and even brilliancy, in any given pursuit or accomplishment, without either of these qualifications ; at least, without the latter. Arts and sciences may be practised and advanced to a certain degree very successfully, though the aspirant's conceptions of their respective ends may be very inadequate ; and his care about arriving at those ends, for their own sake, absolutely nothing. Power, honour, profit, a sense of duty, or some other extraneous motive, may interfere with the natural bent of our exertions, and urge us to make progress in things, from which, if left to ourselves, we should have drawn back in indifference, perhaps in loathing. Neither is it intended to dispute the beneficial effects, in many instances, of such extraneous interference. But as it would be false to say, that he who practises an art for hire, and would leave it off, should it cease to be gainful, has a genuine *taste* for it : so it must still remain true on the whole, in spite of such exceptions as have now been adverted to, that the only *security* (humanly speaking) for success in any study or pursuit, is such a sound conception of the end, and such a hearty love of it, as we have now supposed to constitute that quality : according to a sentiment in the Book of Ecclesiasticus : " Whatsoever thou takest in

hand, remember the end, and thou shalt never do amiss."

It can hardly be worth while to dwell, more minutely, upon the way, in which this remembrance of the end comes to be so important, towards ensuring improvement, and, generally speaking, success, in practical matters. Evidently the most material difference between men in these respects—as in the use of their bodily strength for mechanical purposes—lies not so much in the quantity of talent they have to exert, as in the direction, right or wrong, wherein they choose to apply it: supposing, always, an average degree of natural aptitude. Now the true knowledge of the end gives the right direction in the first instance; and the hearty habitual desire of it would make us diligent and thoughtful, and therefore, in the long run, successful, in our choice of means. And thus a true and lasting taste for any study or accomplishment is essentially distinguished from a tendency to occasional flights, and fits of fondness for it. The one, knowing the end, is furnished with a constant standard, whereby to distinguish what is really important and essential from what is not so. The other, depending upon impulse merely, when it is right, is right at random; is continually mistaking the circumstances and outward habiliments of things for the things themselves; calling great little and little great; and thus, laying itself open to continual disappointment, is much more likely

to subside before long into heartless indifference.

The sincere wish of obtaining the end, be it what it may, is more especially requisite, in order to give unity and consistency to our efforts. It is next to impossible to make people work steadily upon one plan, who are not in earnest bent upon success in that plan, as an object worthy of pursuit for its own sake. If display be their motive, they will only exert themselves in such measure and manner, as is necessary to attract the world's attention, and win its applause; if money, only so far as is profitable; and so of all other extraneous influences.

Upon considering, then, the several arts and faculties, we see reason to conclude, that perceiving and delighting in the truth with regard to any of them, is a very different thing from general superiority of talent, and much more to be depended upon, as affording a better chance of real and lasting excellency.

If this hold in the partial and secondary occupations of life, much more might it be looked for in that greatest occupation, the sum of all life and action,—I mean, the pursuit of happiness. It is but too evident, that with regard to this, most men's minds are in the same kind of posture, as we have described them to be in, with regard to each particular art. They take, occasionally, a certain degree of interest in it, but have little or no true taste for

it. They live, upon the whole, at random : seldom troubling themselves with the thought of any one grand object, with a view to which their whole conduct should be regulated, but taking up with such immediate ends, as come and go, from time to time, in and out of their imaginations. Of those, again, who are more decisive in their plans,—who have chosen each his own end in life, and are turning every thing, diligently enough, to account in their respective schemes ; it is clear, were it only from the great diversity of ends, that a large majority must be very far astray.

There is, then, in the conduct of human life, a stronger temptation to go on at random without any end at all, than can well be supposed in any of the particular arts. There is also a greater choice of apparent ends, than any one of them can present. For both reasons, the chances of going wrong, in pursuit of happiness, are many times more numerous than in pursuit of any particular object. And the necessity and paramount value of that Moral Taste, which can alone secure us among so many hazards, will become so much the more evident.

By "*moral taste*," according to that explanation of the word taste in general, upon which this argument proceeds, would be denoted a sound perception of the chief good, together with a real and steady wish to obtain it. Now it is farther to be observed, that in the arts and partial occupations of life, it is very possible for these two elements of

taste to be separated from each other. A man may have the right understanding of the end of an art, without caring to obtain it: but so far as he does go in it from any foreign motive, his understanding of the end will make him go right. But in morals, right understanding and right desire depend much more closely upon each other. Wrong choice deadens our sense of the general principle, as surely as wrong principle misleads and debases our choice. Whether this can be fully accounted for, or no, (as it has been, in a great measure, from our faculty of passive habits,) the matter of fact is unquestionable; and we may fairly conclude from it, that the true and consistent desire of excellency is even more essential to moral taste, than to taste in any particular occupation or accomplishment.

In whatever degree, then, the considerations now advanced may seem to account for the preference, due to self-devotion and singleness of purpose above general ingenuity and talent, with a view to excellence in the several arts and pursuits, into which life is divided: in the same degree, and much more, will they account for the like preference, in the universal pursuit of happiness, and the universal art of living well. And so far we may admit the satisfactory conviction, that whatever claim Holy Scripture may seem to advance, on behalf of Christian sincerity, to be accepted as a competent judge on all questions of

practical religion, is no paradox, no unaccountable exception to the ordinary course of God's dealings with mankind, but is just what analogy, and antecedent reasoning, would lead considerate persons to expect.

In fact, we can hardly open the Bible at all, without finding such a claim earnestly and distinctly recognised. To judge fairly, indeed, of the truth and importance of this observation, we should examine, with reference to it, the whole of Scripture, considered as an exhibition more or less entire, of the scheme or system of God's dealings with mankind. The contents of the Bible should be patiently and thoughtfully considered with strict attention to this point: Whether the selection of its topics, the order in which they are disposed, and the method of treating them, be not apparently such, as to supply the fullest probation possible of the reader's honesty and seriousness: startling to such as will take offence, but ever leading those, who approach it in the right disposition, from one degree of spiritual strength to another, and fixing within them, daily, a more sober and earnest hope of everlasting life.

A striking exemplification of this may be found in the order, in which the two leading historical points of the true religion are presented to any one, who reads the Bible regularly on from the beginning to the end: the corruption of mankind being the prominent doctrine of the Old Testament,

and their redemption, of the New. That is, the truths most revolting and distressing to human nature, but most continually presented to our view in real life, are cautiously and fully impressed upon the mind, before it is invited to dwell upon the more cheering and elevating half of the Gospel. This seems exactly what ordinary minds would require. To have the disease, of which they are conscious, recognised, and its symptoms truly described, is enough to give them full confidence in their physician. But it is not so exactly the way of proceeding best calculated to attract independent and sanguine spirits, who do not so much care to be helped, as to learn how to help themselves. It is easy to perceive, moreover, how precisely the degree of acceptance, which this method of instruction would meet with, would be proportioned to the humbleness and self-denial of the learner, and to his just sense of moral obligation: and how unlikely it is, of itself, to captivate minds accustomed to the graces of literature, and to the rhetorical exhibition of truth in its most inviting form.

Thus much by way of faint specimen of the effect of such an examination of Scripture, as was just now supposed. If fairly instituted and patiently carried through, it would leave as little doubt of the divine purpose in this matter, as the analysis of any other combination of means, natural or providential, is wont to leave of the

purpose, which the Guide of Nature and Providence had in view in that part of His dispensations^d.

But as any enquiry of this sort must, from its very nature, be a work of time; and moreover may seem, in some respects, peculiarly liable to be made a work of human fancy and prejudice, instead of fair and reasonable exposition upon principles taught of God: it is very material to observe, that Holy Scripture itself has, in many ways and many places, anticipated its result; laying it down repeatedly, as a kind of canon of sacred criticism, that, in disputed cases, that interpretation of God's works and ways, which approves itself most entirely to the sober and devout spirit, stands in general a fairer chance of being the true interpretation, than what has the suffrage of minds ingenious and original, but deficient in those moral requisites.

This observation might be verified by reference both to the historical and to the didactic parts of Holy Scripture: the one describing, as matter of fact, the reception which religious and moral truth has ever met with in the world at large: the other inculcating, as matter of warning, what sort of practical preparation it implies and takes for granted, by the method in which it addresses itself to each individual. Let us, for example, turn our thoughts to the numerous declarations, in the Book of Proverbs, concerning the sort of persons, who

^d See Miller's Bampton Lectures, iv, v, vi.

make farthest proficiency in "wisdom;" and the process, by which they attain to it. "Evil men understand not judgment: but they who seek the Lord understand all things." "The scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not." "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom." "Commit thy way unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established." These texts are but as samples of a large portion of the verses of that most instructive book: by which it seems clearly indicated, that the "Wisdom," "Knowledge," "Understanding," so highly there commended, is something very different from eminent intellectual ability, since the acquisition of it is inculcated on all men, as a duty within their reach. It seems to be much the same thing as the *φρόνησις* of the Grecian Moralists: "the practical understanding of our true interest."

Now concerning this, whether derived from natural reason only, or furthered also by those helps, which God, by especial revelation, had afforded to the Jewish nation—for the entire omission of all reference to that peculiar dispensation seems to warrant us in extending the meaning of the Proverbs to the first as well as the second of these classes—of practical wisdom, whichever way communicated, we are every where told by the wisest of mankind, that the poor, the lowly, the humble-minded, stand the best chance

of arriving at it; and that the only sure "beginning," or foundation, of it, is "the Fear of the Lord."

These lessons of the sacred Moralist, concerning human life in general, might be much enforced and illustrated from the experience of God's chosen people, as recorded in the historical parts of the Old Testament.

Negatively; it should seem that the worthies of the Jewish History, and favourites of Almighty God, were by no means, all or most of them, persons of preeminent ability, humanly speaking. The wisest of them all—as if on purpose to confirm that maxim of his, "Cease from thine own wisdom,"—was allowed to bewilder himself, both in speculation and in practice, quite as much as any. The Book of Ecclesiastes, the authentic record both of his wanderings and his wisdom—a book which, even if it were uninspired, would ever be most interesting to all genuine philosophers, as containing what may be called "The Confessions of King Solomon"—presents, in this point of view, a singular contrast to one, which in the Hebrew Canon is placed very near it: the simple and affecting narrative of Ruth the Moabitess. He who knew himself, upon the faith of an especial promise from God, to be the wisest of mankind—after having sounded, to the utmost of his ability, all the depths and "devices of man's heart"—makes his report to be, That the Counsel of the Lord—

that way of happiness, which sends us to God for it, and which God approves,—that only “shall stand.” His “conclusion of the whole matter” is, “Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole of man,” the only purpose, for which we exist at all.

Now this is just ending where Ruth had begun; had begun, in spite of disadvantages almost as singular as the helps which Solomon enjoyed. Domestic affection—the love of an afflicted mother-in-law—set her first upon choosing Israel to be her people, and Jehovah to be her God. And in the faith so implanted she left the land of her nativity, and found “a full reward of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings she had come to trust.” A good heart, and a steady resolution to do what she knew to be right, placed her, as it were, at once upon the rock, to which Solomon hardly won his way after many hard conflicts, against doubts within, and temptations without.

Enough perhaps has been said to point out the sort of persons, who are represented in Holy Scripture as most apt and likely to receive aright the truths of natural religion, and of the law which God gave by Moses.

Concerning that full and final dispensation, under which, by His great mercy, our lot is cast; as the evidences of its truth are more obvious and abundant, so the advantages of moral above merely intellectual qualifications in appreciating that evi-

dence are proportionably enhanced, and far more distinctly set forth. This indeed was to be expected, in a Gospel professing to be universal, and so differing from all other systems of morality which the world had as yet known. Moses held out a promise of happiness in a great measure confined to one nation only : the philosophers, practically at least, to one class in each nation, and that the least numerous : those, namely, who had leisure and ability for refined and deep speculation. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ was avowedly preached "to the poor;" to the poor, both in station and in spirit. That is, it did not require, as most systems of knowledge do, any peculiar advantages, mental or external, in order to be duly received ; but was so framed, as to lie, practically, within the reach of the mass of mankind.

What great stress our Blessed Saviour laid upon this characteristic of His doctrine, may be seen by His answer to St. John's disciples ; in which it stands for the sum of that internal evidence, by which, according to the Prophets, the religion of the Messiah was to be known ; and is put on a level with the greatest of His mighty works. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk ; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear : the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." In good truth, the more we know of Christianity, and of the poor, the more deeply shall we be impressed with the exact adapt-

ation of the one to the other: both in the substance of what it teaches, and in the manner of teaching. And the poor, it is carefully to be remembered, must ever constitute the great majority of those, to whom Christianity is addressed. But this is a subject which can only be glanced at here. It is of consequence, however, to remark, that whatever suited the Gospel to the poor in situation, would in a great measure bring it down to the level of ordinary understandings also: the difficulty, in both cases, being much of the same kind. For to convey a system of new and important truths to a mind comparatively disqualified for intellectual labour, must require nearly the same expedients, whether the unfitness arise from natural dulness, or from long disuse. On either supposition, the mind of the learner being as it were shrunk and narrowed within the compass of mere daily life, it is through the business of daily life, by familiar illustrations and arguments from analogy, that a wise teacher will endeavour to introduce whatever knowledge is really desirable, of a higher and more abstract kind. The declaration, therefore, of our Blessed Lord, in the passage alluded to, is very much to our present purpose; even though we suppose Him to use the word "poor" in its literal signification only.

And yet, if we were to extend it to all those, whom He elsewhere denominates, "poor in spirit," we might find, very easily, ample warrant for our

interpretation. We might produce other declarations of our Blessed Master Himself: as when He thanked His Father for having "hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes:" and when He promised the knowledge of His doctrine as the appropriate reward of conformity to His will: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."

Next, we might look to the prophetic descriptions of the general spirit of the Gospel: among which one may distinguish those of Isaiah as remarkably full and express; so much so, that it would be hard to produce one of his sketches of the Messiah's kingdom, without some such clause as the following: "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more: but thine eyes shall see thy teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." And again, "precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people:" that is, He will condescend to teach them, be they never so simple, as nurses teach children,—by imitating their imperfect utterance.

We might further cite what the Prophets have spoken of the class and character of those, who should prove readiest converts to the religion thus

described. "In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." "Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." "An highway shall be there, and a way: and it shall be called, 'The way of holiness;' the unclean shall not pass over it—the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

Finally, we might verify these anticipations from the Apostolic history: from the remark of St. Paul, that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called;" and from what St. Mark tells us concerning the preaching of our Saviour, that "the common people heard Him gladly."

These things, taken all together, may seem fully to justify, upon scriptural grounds, the comfortable lesson, which, as we have seen reason to conclude, experience and analogy would have taught us: That we may safely take the judgment of a sincere and single mind, with or without ingenious and original research, for our guide to truth in all matters practical; and most in the most important; the determination of moral conduct and interpretation of God's revealed will.

Whoever shall consider this proposition atten-

tively, will find it to be of the very highest practical importance, in many various ways. At present, however, it is only possible to advert, very briefly, to its immediate bearings on our own conduct, and particularly on the regulation of our studies.

Would we look upon ourselves, truly, as individuals entrusted with a large portion of literary and intellectual advantages, such as cannot but involve us in a most serious responsibility before Him, Who has so highly favoured us: and would we add to this the consideration which the text suggests, that, after all, these advantages alone cannot advance us in genuine wisdom, so far as the keeping of God's commandments will advance the weakest and humblest of our brethren; we should surely delight ourselves less, than I fear we do in general, with the possession, and should take more pains about the use and regulation, of those precious, but dangerous, endowments. We should less easily abandon ourselves to any investigation which may happen to attract us for the moment, without staying to enquire how far it is worth the time and thoughts of a Christian. We should consent to be taught resignation from the disappointments and errors, which will ever beset the operations of fallen spirits in an imperfect world: and when our enquiries are more successful, we should not rest satisfied with their immediate results, but should learn of them to lift up our hearts, with humble and grateful hope, towards

that interminable progress in all knowledge truly worthy of us, which is certain to follow upon admission, through the merits of our Redeemer, to His presence, Who is "the true Light, and in Whom is no darkness at all."

SERMON II.

IMPLICIT FAITH RECOGNISED BY REASON.

PSALM cxix. 99, 100.

I have more understanding than all my teachers ; for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients ; because I keep Thy precepts.

It was endeavoured to ascertain, on a former occasion, what sort of persons would appear most likely, judging by analogy from temporal matters, to understand the truths of the Gospel aright : and so to illustrate the acknowledged fact, that moral rather than intellectual proficiency, is the appropriate qualification for that noblest of all studies. And to confirm this anticipation, scriptural evidence was adduced, regarding the kind of characters, among whom our religion was in fact most worthily received. Appeal was also made to the frame and structure of the religion itself, to the constant tenor of prophecy, and to the statements of the Old Testament concerning analogous cases, under true natural religion, and under the Mosaic dispensation.

So far, then, it should seem, that in proportion

as the world has advanced in the knowledge of true happiness, it has become more and more evident, that we must look to the best man, not to the accomplished or most able, for the soundest views on moral and religious subjects: and that, because it is evidently the best man, not the ablest or most accomplished, who knows most of the true end of life, and judges most accurately between things important and things insignificant.

But in order to complete the argument, it is desirable to look into the chief uninspired authorities before the coming of Christ. It is the more desirable, because a disposition undoubtedly prevails among us, greatly to undervalue, at least for all practical purposes, the philosophy of the Greeks and Romans: as if God Almighty, contrary to His own declaration, had "left Himself without witness" among them; or as if the weakest of their moral treatises did not contain truth and reason enough, to put the Christian world to shame for many things, which pass daily in it as natural and excusable.

The fact surely is, that the true view of human happiness, revealed to us fully by the Gospel of Christ, differs from former views, philosophical and religious, not so much in contradicting them, as in going beyond them^a. It proves them, not false, but inadequate. So far, therefore, as they are true, we may expect to find them marked by all

^a οὐκ ἦλθον καταλύσαι, ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι.

the characteristics of moral truth : and among the rest, by this which we are considering ; viz. that any single-hearted, sincere man, who would put so much confidence in them as to make trial of them in his life and conversation, should prove a competent judge of their soundness and sufficiency. And this kind of practical confidence, whether exercised in morals or religion, I shall take leave to denote, throughout this enquiry, by the name of " implicit Faith."

My proposition is, that not only in the express and final exhibitions of the chief good by the Jewish and Christian revelations, but also in the previous, gradual, development of it, so far as that could be accomplished without evident, supernatural aid, we find continually, by God's good providence, more and more advantage given, a door opened wider and wider, to this sort of " implicit Faith," as opposed to mere acuteness and originality of intellect.

Let us consider, first, the nearest approach, which human reason, purposely abstracted from all traditional notices of natural religion, could make to the true account of human happiness. This appears to be exhibited in the system of Aristotle, which makes happiness consist in the everlasting contemplation of the highest object, that can come before the understanding of man ; and supposes it to be, most probably, attainable by the discipline of moral virtue. A statement, which

every Christian must acknowledge to be true, so far as it goes. And I think there can be no question, but that it laid a real obligation upon the consciences of all, who lived within reach of it, to seek happiness by the practice of moral virtue, according to their best judgment, throughout their lives.

And as the obligation was real, so it was much more level to the capacity of every man, and therefore much more nearly universal, than we, from our habit of regarding it merely as part of a scholastic theory, are generally apt to imagine. Such at least appears to have been the opinion of the moralist himself. He had observed, that they who lived most wisely were often utterly unable to argue in recommendation of their own rule of conduct. And yet he not only considered that conduct reasonable, but even censured, as highly unreasonable, those who refused to be guided by it, as authority and example for the regulation of their own lives. "We ought," says he, "to pay regard to the dictates and decisions of the experienced and elderly, that is to say, of the wise, even when unaccompanied by proof, as carefully as we should attend to any demonstration. For such persons, because they have a sort of eye of their own by virtue of their experience, see the principles of moral conduct*." A remarkable acknowledgment this, to come from one of the

* Eth. b. vi. p. 285.

greatest masters of reasoning, in deference to what may be called unreasoning faith in the final good effects of virtue.

But I observed, that Aristotle appears purposely to have excluded from his theory all traditional notices of natural religion. It is impossible that he should have been ignorant of what Plato had taught concerning the probability of a future state of rewards and punishments, after death. It is inconceivable, whatever he may have thought of some of his master's arguments, that he should have treated his conclusions, corresponding as they did to the best wishes and feelings of human nature, with mere scorn and contempt. His silence then on these important points must have been designed, in some way or other, to corroborate his main argument. And I can conjecture nothing so probable, as that it was designed to adapt that argument to such sceptical reasoners, as disdained to be guided, in any measure, by obscure tradition, and what they would call superstitious fancy. But even these, unless they would give up their common sense altogether, could not resist the dictates of experience and analogy: to which, accordingly, throughout his great work, Aristotle, scrupulously and exclusively, refers them. To conclude from this, and he was himself an unbeliever in true natural religion, were as unreasonable as to conclude of our own Bishop Butler, that he was an unbeliever in the facts of revelation, because he

has used them so sparingly in his Sermons, as authorities for demonstrating the great principles of moral duty. In both cases, the object was the same : to stop the mouths of a sceptical and too argumentative generation, by referring them to their own common sense, their own constant practice, in matters of mere worldly and temporal interest. Revelation, then, in the one case, and tradition in the other, however certain or probable they might appear to the writers, could have comparatively no place in their works : which neither they themselves, nor the Providence which guided them both, ever intended as a full exhibition of all that might be known of human happiness and duty, but as a practical introduction to the only right way of studying that momentous subject.

It is on this account, that although in order of time Aristotle came after Plato, and therefore might be expected to have worked with his materials, yet in order of study Plato more properly comes after Aristotle. The mind which has been prepared, by the analogical reasoning of the one, and his constant irresistible appeal to facts, to receive favourably any thing, which strengthens the claims of virtue : such a mind is in the best training to appreciate, as they deserve, the traditional or instinctive anticipations of the other.

For it is beyond a doubt, that although the reasoning of Aristotle be more convincing, the conclusions of Plato have approached, in some

remarkable points, a good deal nearer the truth. With regard to the immortality of the soul, and the practical wisdom of living always with a view to a future state of retribution, this has been generally observed. But there is another point, of very great consequence, which does not seem to have obtained any thing like due notice. And that is, that he seems, of the two, to have come much nearer the idea of *personal communion* with the Deity, and with higher orders of created spirits, as constituting the true chief good of a reasonable creature. There are little touches scattered up and down the *Phædon*, which would impress this truth upon a considerate reader, much more affectingly than any direct argument could. As where he describes the soul of the dying as "that invisible thing, departing into another region, like itself, substantial, undefiled, invisible;" he adds most emphatically, "to the mansions, I mean, of Him Who is invisible, to the good and wise God: whither, if God will, my soul too is presently to depart." And in the *Apology of Socrates*, it is not the prospect of solitary contemplation, but of the society which he expects to find in the shades, of the good and wise men of all former generations, on which he chiefly depends for comfort.

Now the observation here to be made is, that as Plato's notion of the chief good approaches nearer the truth than Aristotle's, so his demand of implicit faith in default of overpowering evidence, though

not perhaps more peremptory, was however much more constantly kept in view. It is, in fact, implied throughout, in the doubting and cautious tone, which Socrates uniformly preserves on such subjects: which though it was commonly ascribed to some peculiarity of his temper, certainly arose in a great measure from the just sense he entertained of human ignorance. He would not speak positively on the great truths of natural religion, because he knew no evidence to warrant his doing so. Yet by all his discourses, and still more by his example, he did most uniformly and positively recommend to men to act as if those truths were entirely demonstrated.

There is one sentence in the Phædon, which may serve as a key both to his conduct and to his reasoning. He has been drawing, in strong colours, a contrast between the punishments and the rewards, which he supposed might exist in another world. And thus he concludes it.

“To be positive, that these things are such as I have described them, becomes not a considerate person; that however thus it is, or nearly thus, with regard to our souls and their habitations, (for certainly these are appearances of the soul’s being something immortal,) this seems to me no irrational idea. AND I THINK IT WORTH WHILE TO TAKE ALL CHANCES, UPON A SUPPOSITION OF ITS BEING SO: *δοκεῖ ἐμοὶ ἄξιον κινδύνευσαι, οἰομένῳ οὕτως ἔχειν.* For,” he concludes, “it is a glorious hazard: and

one ought to use such thoughts as wholesome charms and incantations for one's own distempered mind :” “*χρὴ τὰ τοιαῦτα ὥσπερ ἐπαδεῖν ἑαυτῶ.*”

This is, in other words, the very same principle, which Bishop Butler has applied to the evidences of Christianity, in the following passage. “Considering the infinite importance of religion revealed as well as natural, I think it may be said in general, that whoever will weigh the matter thoroughly may see, there is not near so much difference, as is commonly imagined, between what ought in reason to be the rule of life, to those persons who are fully convinced of its truth, and to those, who have only a serious, doubting apprehension, that it may be true. Their hopes and fears, and obligations, will be in various degrees; but as the subject-matter of their hopes and fears is the same, so the subject-matter of their obligations, what they are bound to do, and to refrain from, is not so very unlike.” Thus far Bishop Butler. And it is acting on this principle,—i. e. taking, practically, the side of virtue and self-denial, wherever the evidence seems doubtful,—which has been here denominated “implicit Faith,” and which, as I conceive, the Bible points out, as sure to bring even a plain man safe through all material difficulties in religion.

The Gospel, then, in its recommendation of such implicit Faith, does no more than correspond to the expectations of the soundest philosophers of

antiquity. And no wonder : since there is nothing, as we have already seen, more exactly analogous to the usual and ordained course of things.

I now proceed to point out some of the uses of considering this analogy : first, as it makes a material part of that general evidence of our religion which arises out of its correspondence with the constitution and course of nature : secondly, as it may afford some valuable hints for the comfort and edification of unlearned or erring believers.

In all practical matters merely temporal, it is, as was before shewn, being soberly and constantly in earnest, rather than ingenuity and brilliancy, which ensures success. This, as far as it goes, would lead us to expect the same in that greatest practical concern of eternal happiness. And Scripture, as we have seen, expressly affirms that it is so : and is framed, throughout, upon that supposition.

Now, there was an objection formerly brought against Christianity—and it is still, apparently, often felt, though less daringly expressed—that it was the religion, not of Rulers and Pharisees, educated and refined understandings, but of ordinary people, who knew not the law. Nor is it very uncommon to meet with persons, who profess unbelief in conversation with their equals, but go to church, and observe other outward appearances of Christianity, for their inferiors' sake. The same feeling is remarkably exhibited in what is related of a modern unbeliever, that he was surprised one

day by a friend in the act of teaching his daughter to read the New Testament. His friend expressing some astonishment, he said, "I see your meaning: but, after all, where can she find better instruction?" He considered the Gospel good for his child, though not good enough for himself. It was better suited, then, in his opinion, and surer to approve itself, to an ordinary, unprejudiced understanding, than to a cast of mind more subtle and elevated, and better versed in the mazes of abstract speculation. An acknowledgment, which went farther than may appear at first sight, towards evincing, not the moral utility alone, but likewise the probable truth, of Christianity. That very characteristic of it, which disgusted him, being in reality a decisive instance of its corresponding with the course of God's temporal government: and therefore, so far, affording a presumption, that it proceeded from the same Author.

If unbelievers have never been much pressed with this argument, from the sufficiency of Christianity to the happiness of the ordinary sort of men; the omission is easily accounted for. Cases, to which appeal might effectually be made, are rare: as rare as it is to find believers really and consistently endeavouring to act up to their profession. Moreover, it has been rather hastily taken for granted on both sides, that the whole of this experimental proof is a matter of feeling rather than of reason, and however convincing to him

who has fairly tried it, cannot be brought home to the understanding of another person.

Yet to a dispassionate sceptic it must surely seem worth considering, why those Christians, who were freest from all enthusiasm; those who have had the meanest opinion of themselves, and were least disposed to lean upon their own understanding; have always been found most uncompromising, and, if the expression may be so used, most stubborn, in their conviction of the truth of the Gospel, and of the soundness of its practical rules. The story of the old peasant, who silenced, as is said, an Arian disputer by merely repeating the Apostles' Creed, might stand as a specimen of the mode and ground of belief, to which I am now referring, and in which it best becomes busy and unlearned Christians to acquiesce. Among wilful gainsayers, or rapid inconsiderate observers, it may pass indeed for bigotry or prejudice. But a very little reflection will shew, that it is what on all other subjects must ever be accounted true practical wisdom. It is no more than abiding by the dictates of experience, not in defiance, but in default, of theoretical and argumentative knowledge.

For example: suppose that on the day of a child's birth, a collection of writings should be put into the hands of his parents, purporting to contain rules for the management of his diet and regimen; and suppose, that after having tried them for years, he found them in all respects satisfactory and

sufficient: found that he could not swerve from them without being ill, and that he enjoyed bodily health exactly in such proportion, as he adhered, in practice, to those rules. Would it not be reasonable for him to believe, that they were left for his use by some one who knew his constitution perfectly? He might be utterly unable to explain why and how such a mode of treatment should answer so well. Yet every one would call it inexcusable rashness in him, to adopt an opposite regimen upon the suggestion of any theorist, though recommended by the most plausible shew of demonstration. Now the care of the soul is a practical matter, just as much as the care of the body; the only difference being in the comparative importance of the two: and that is indeed unspeakable. But this only makes it the more necessary for men to be very peremptory in abiding by those rules, which in all practical matters are essential to their well-doing. And one of the foremost of these is, "never to act upon reason, in opposition to practical principles, which the Author of nature gave us to act upon." Which Canon, laid down in so many words by one of the safest teachers of religion, natural and revealed, that ever blessed this Church, may indeed be much abused and misapplied by wilful men. But one may venture to affirm, that it can be no abuse of it, to say concerning that conviction, which humble and sober-minded Christians possess of the truth of their religion,

without being able at all to argue upon it, that such conviction, being supported by the growing experience of a well-spent life, is indeed a practical principle, given them by God Almighty for their good, and ought not to be parted with on any account, or for any argument whatever.

The analogy to which I just now referred, suggests the farther remark, that, to a candid sceptic, the argument from the authority of implicit believers is *cumulative*: i. e. a fresh argument is added every time a new instance is observed of a man's finding his happiness in Christianity, whether he be rich or poor, learned or ignorant. Just as in the case of bodily health—if a person, comparing his own experience with that of his neighbours, should find that they also had received from the same authority a similar set of prescriptions, and always, when fairly tried, with the same unerring result—could he deem less of the author, than that he was an universal, infallible physician?

The blame, therefore, of begging the question, which the infidel is continually throwing upon the implicit believer, must recoil at least upon himself. For it is he who takes upon him to judge, without trial, of the result of certain rules of conduct, in direct opposition to all those who have actually tried them.

And thus the demand of "implicit Faith," which the Bible so earnestly reiterates, instead of con-

stituting an objection to our religion, is in fact a mark of its truth : and, as such, may be urged in refutation of unbelievers.

It is, moreover, of great consequence to be kept in view by unlearned, but true and reasonable, Christians. Such persons are sometimes apt to be disheartened, upon finding themselves unable to defend in words, or at all to convey to another person, opinions, upon which they have soberly and considerately made up their own minds. Skill and readiness in disputing about a doctrine is so far from implying, or much forwarding, a firm practical conviction, that it may not seldom be traced, even in characters by no means disingenuous or insincere, to the direct contrary state of mind. Not being quite satisfied concerning some part of religious truth, and ill-enduring the condition of doubt and discomfort, (which, after all, would do them no great harm, if they would be careful always to take the safe side in practice;) subtle and ingenious men set themselves to devise argument after argument in its behalf; and thus they have often succeeded, to a wonder, in strengthening and extending the fabric of theology, perhaps to the benefit of others, without having been able to find under it any shelter, final and complete, for their own harassed and perplexed spirits. Thus the Church has witnessed, more than once, the sorrowful spectacle of orthodox teachers falling off, in their latter

days, from the very truths, which they had themselves, before, most triumphantly defended: the law of compensation, which has so wide a range in the natural world, extending, apparently, in this among other instances, to the moral world also: in that the versatility and ingenuity, which enable men to devise new modes of evidence, are too often accompanied with a disposition to be restless and unsatisfied with the old.

It is true, Christians are enjoined to be "always ready for an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them." But it is, manifestly, "the answer of a good conscience," sober and holy living, which is meant. We are directed to lead such a life, as may be appealed to, if necessary, in vindication of our Creed. If we do so, it matters little, comparatively, whether we can dispute for our religion or no. Christianity is not a matter of logical arrangement, or philosophical investigation; much less of rhetorical skill. Not that these things are of trifling value, as talents. But then it should always be remembered, that they are only talents, and will, accordingly, prove worse than useless, except they be united with sincere humility.

Trains of thought like this seem desirable, especially in situations and periods where intellectual eminence is in danger of being over-prized, in order to reconcile us to our own usual mediocrity, and to make us join heartily, as on the whole a

sound view of the subject would, I think, induce us to join, in such a sentiment concerning mental attainments, as was once expressed in prayer concerning the endowments of fortune: "Give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me."

Our judgment, also, of the state of mind, and religious proficiency, of those in any way committed to our charge, (the only persons, strictly speaking, of whom it becomes us to judge at all,) would be materially affected by such considerations. We shall be in less danger of rashly condemning the simple, or lightly excusing sinners on the ground of ignorance—less likely to fall into the common error of imagining, that those who talk best about the truth, really know and love it best—if we bear it always in remembrance, that they, whose meditation is in God's testimonies, shall have more understanding than all their teachers: and they who keep His commandments, shall be wiser than the aged.

Not, however, by a wisdom, or an understanding, directly and perceptibly infused, or communicated from heaven by sensible inspiration. For this too is a further use of considering the analogy which subsists between Christianity and common life in the matter of implicit Faith: viz. that it would tend to relax the hold, which enthusiastic thoughts are daily gaining upon the minds even of sincere believers, and to make their views of their duty soberer and

more practical. In order to this good effect, what is chiefly required is, duly to impress serious persons with the belief, that God's Spirit works on our spirits, not miraculously, but by quiet methods, guiding not superseding reason, and in such a way, as we must never expect to distinguish from the natural movements of our own thoughts. Such, evidently, is the tendency of the argument, on which I have been employed. It not only takes a large portion of Scripture out of the hands of the enthusiast, but gives it a turn the direct contrary way. Such texts, I mean, as dwell on "the calling of the foolish, the base and despised, rather than the wise, the mighty, and the noble:" on "the hiding of holy things from the wise and prudent, and revealing them to babes:" on "the doing God's will, being the way to know of His doctrine;" and the like. The weak impatience of men, too soon weary of the slow and silent process of real improvement, causes them to lay hold on every thing of this kind, as warrant for their expecting some interruption of the established order of things, something approaching to sensible, miraculous inspiration, for conveying to sincere unlearned Christians that knowledge of the ordinary means, of which they are supposed to be destitute. Whereas the true meaning of the Bible in all such passages is strictly analogous to what our daily experience in temporal matters would lead us to expect. "The word of God is a

lantern to the feet, and a light unto the paths"—not of every one who takes up the Scripture, as though there were something almost meritorious in the mere act of reading it; or, it may be, with some secret unacknowledged hope of special aid to be vouchsafed to him in interpreting of it, as though he were, beyond his brethren, high in God's favour:—not unto these is God's word a light, but to those, who have sworn, "and are stedfastly purposed, to keep His righteous judgments:" to those all without exception; and to none besides.

Thus, as intellectual pride may well be abased, upon finding that it has been God's will to constitute uprightness, rather than ability, judge of the truth on the highest of all subjects: so it may reasonably serve to put down spiritual pride, and those self-satisfying thoughts, which the doctrine of assurance, in its various shades, is continually fostering among Christians; if they are made to be aware, that there is nothing capricious—no sort of partiality or fatalism—in God's distribution of spiritual understanding: that the Holy Spirit works with us, exactly in such measure as we are disposed to work for ourselves: and that it is not the notion of having, already, pleased God, but the earnest desire to please Him better for the future, which must accompany us in our use of the means of grace, if we would not have them prove to us, in the end, means rather of confusion and condemnation.

SERMON III.

IMPLICIT FAITH RECONCILED WITH FREE ENQUIRY.

1 THESSALONIANS v. 19, 20.

Despise not prophesyings: prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

THESE two verses, taken both together, appear to contain full directions on the true way of profiting by the public instruction, delivered from time to time in the Church by the authorized ministers of the Gospel, whether that instruction be contained in set formularies, as in the Creeds, Lessons, and Exhortations of the Prayer Book: or in occasional Sermons and Homilies; but more especially the latter. For so large is the import of the term "prophesying" in the New Testament.

It is true, that the Apostle is here speaking, in the first instance, with a view to his own times, and to cases of professed inspiration. We know from the first Epistle to the Corinthians^a, that among the various extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were so bountifully dispensed to the

^a 1 Cor. xiv.

primitive Church, prophecy, or the authorized declaration of God's will, though of the greatest use for edifying, was most apt to be unduly depreciated, in comparison with other gifts, more striking, and more evidently supernatural.

To correct this error, the Thessalonian converts are here warned not to "despise prophesyings." And, on the other hand, to prevent their running blindly after any doctrine, which might please their ear, or their fancy, they are told, that it is their duty, as a Church and congregation, to judge of what they hear; not of the teacher, nor of the style, but of the sense of what is spoken: to judge of it, not as matter of speculation or criticism, but simply with a view to their own practical improvement. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

St. John, in later and more perilous times, proposes a rule to the same purpose: and by comparing the two together, it will be seen how closely, in the minds of the inspired writers, orthodox faith was associated with sound morality. "Beloved^b, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh, is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in the flesh, is not of God."

^b 1 John iv. 1—3.

“That which is good,” is St. Paul’s test; “that which confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh,” St. John’s. The fact is, the two rules are, as a little consideration will shew, completely identical. “That which is good,” implies before all things a due sense of the first and great commandment: “To love God with all our hearts.” And if we so love the Father, He has Himself told us, both by clear and express words of Scripture, and by His Church’s authoritative interpretation of these words, that we shall love and honour the Son and the Holy Ghost also: without reserve; without fear or danger of excess.

As then the being and moral government of God, once known, are an ample standard of all moral and supernatural truths; so likewise are the mysterious verities implied in the saying, “Jesus Christ come in the flesh:” I mean, the Trinity and Incarnation. Whatever is contrary to those doctrines will ultimately be found immoral^c; and whatever is immoral, will be found contrary to those doctrines. Truth and duty, could we see all, would be recognised as perfect unfailing tests of each other; “that which is good,” and “that which owns Christ incarnate,” would appear to be but several aspects of the Divine Will accepted and realized by man.

Nor let it be supposed that these Apostolical warnings have respect wholly to a state of things,

^c Compare Butler’s Analogy, part ii. ch. 1.

which has long ago ceased to exist. It is always a paradox, to make such a statement concerning any part of Scripture; since by the universal consent and use of Christians, the Word of God is His gift alike to one generation and another. And as to the particular passage from which the text is taken, were we to examine it in detail, several arguments would occur, which would render such a limitation exceedingly improbable. But in a question of this sort, it is generally best to rely on the impression, which the words themselves, simply recited with the context, would produce on an unbiassed mind. "We exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and toward all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Not unfrequently, perhaps, in the Apostolic writings, admonitions of merely local or occasional import may be found, intermingled with aphorisms

of universal and literal application at all times. But then, in order to justify the limitation, it ought always to be strongly marked by something in the passage itself. As in the latter part of the Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul is continually drawn back, as it were, from his general principles, to make a particular application to the consciences and circumstances of those to whom he was writing, and whose peculiar danger led him to take a more than ordinary interest in them^d.

But in the place now before us, there is nothing of this kind to appropriate his meaning. For aught that appears in the context, or any where in the Epistle, the precepts, "Despise not prophecies," yet "Prove all things," are spoken as absolutely, and addressed as widely, as, "Pray without ceasing;" or, "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

It may be thought, however, that there is little need, at present, to dwell much on the caution here given, against despising, or undervaluing, the public instruction of God's ministers: it being matter of constant observation, that sermons are far too much thought of, in comparison with common prayer, the administration of the sacraments, and other parts of the public worship of God. But a very little reflection will shew, that there never was a time, in which it was more seasonable. It

^d Gal. v. 7—9; vi. 11—13, 17.

is not invidious or querulous to say so. The acknowledged fact, that literature and criticism are now more widely diffused than ever they were before, would, of itself, lead one to expect as much. For these are obviously the very pursuits, the prevalence of which would most perilously tempt the teacher to an undue display of oratory or ingenuity, and the hearer to unprofitable remark, and an irreverent way of treating sacred things. Natural talent may be idolized now, as supernatural gifts were then, at the expense of Christian edification. In such a case, the caution of the Apostle may come as seasonably to us, as it did in the first instance to the Thessalonians or Corinthians. "Despise not prophesyings—do not degrade that, which is Christ's ordinance for the salvation of souls, into a mere literary amusement, a display of transitory ability, or of supposed spiritual gifts."

Christian self-denial is often best practised, because it is least seen, in things of themselves trifling. And possibly it might be no unimproving exercise of it, to men of refined judgments, if they would engage themselves, habitually, to put up with improprieties of style or method, with obscurities, or even fallacies not affecting practice, for the sake of giving themselves and others a better chance of profiting by sermons.

By parity of reasoning, what has been said will apply, in a great measure, to our reading, and also to our conversation, on sacred subjects. It is

against the delicacy of an earnest and reverential mind, to treat any effort lightly or contemptuously, which offers but a possibility of benefit in its eternal and vital interests.

Nor, in thus refraining ourselves, need we fear to derogate, in the least, from the positive part of the Apostolic precept: by which we are bidden to "prove," or "assay, all things." Rather we should be keeping our minds in the best possible frame for obeying it. For it is evident, that the less we allow ourselves to be distracted by thoughts of the ingenuity or eloquence of the person speaking, the soberer and more competent judges are we of the practical tendency of what is spoken: the only authorized touchstone of right and wrong in Christian instruction.

But before proceeding to the consideration of this test, by which all doctrines are to be tried, I have one or two observations to offer, upon the circumstance, that any trial at all is directed. In the first place, it puts an end, at once, to the common sceptical notion concerning our holy faith, as though it were an enemy to thought and investigation, and were best satisfied with a blind unreasoning service. An objection, which can be grounded only upon gross and wilful ignorance of the sacred Scriptures. For their uniform tenor is the same with that of the text: not only to allow, but to enjoin, the freest of all enquiry, the most

completely disengaged from worldly fears and prejudices.

This observation is enforced, by recollecting to which among his converts it is that St. Paul gives the permission, or rather commandment, to "prove all things." Of all the Churches, except perhaps that of Philippi, the Thessalonians appear to have been, personally, most attached to him. Partly from that circumstance, partly, as we may suppose, from his being, at that time, comparatively young in his ministry, his tone in addressing them is peculiarly affectionate and sanguine. He has no need to say to them, as he says to the Corinthians, "Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ:" rather he has to praise them for this very thing, that they had already become "followers of him and of the Lord." It may seem therefore that he is here warning them, lest this tendency to simple child-like submission lay them open to the fraud of the enemy. As if he had said, I know the forwardness of your mind, that as an obedient and loving flock, you love to follow wherever your Pastor guides you, especially if you see in him the known fruit of holiness. And it is well that you should be of this mind: only not so blindly and implicitly, but that you prove all things by the rule which I shall now give you.

The same remark applies, still more pointedly, to the teaching of our Blessed Saviour Himself:

inasmuch as His tone was more authoritative, and His personal claims to respect more overpowering. Yet even He speaks throughout as one who wished His hearers to “prove all things.” His discourses are all (in a certain sense) argumentative: full, it is true, of the most striking and engaging imagery; but still that imagery is always introduced, humanly speaking, for the argument’s sake. In this form, He has Himself conveyed the very same lesson with that in the text, by that emphatic clause in the parable of the sower, so descriptive of weak Christians: I mean where He says, “They have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time^e.” Where it is expressly affirmed, that for a man to profit as he ought, even from the best of truths, they must not be merely taken up from his teacher, but must be rooted and grounded in his own understanding and practice.

Might it not be with a view to this sort of case, that our Blessed Saviour so remarkably checked the young man, who came running to Him with that most true confession and most reasonable demand, “Good Master, what good thing must I do to inherit eternal life^f?” The answer is prefaced by a clause, which to many has proved a source of perplexity: “Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One; that is, God.” The apparent harshness of the reply, and its inconsistency at first

^e St. Mark iv. 17.

^f St. Matthew xix. 16.

glance with what we know of His exalted nature and office, seem best accounted for, by supposing Him to have wished to remind the young enquirer, that the very honours, which were most His due, would not be welcome to Him, if rashly and thoughtlessly paid: that a man's own salvation was His own concern, and his reason was given him, and must be used, to secure it: without which, any respect or admiration he might feel for his divine Instructor would prove but a transitory emotion, not to be depended on in the hour of trial: as indeed the sequel of the narrative too sadly evinced.

But how are we to reconcile a declaration of this kind with the many recommendations, continually occurring in Holy Scripture, of plain undoubting confidence—the temper of little children—as being what God most approves? Are not these incompatible duties—the duty of severe independent enquiry on the one hand, and the duty of confidential implicit faith on the other?

Some persons, by way of reconciling them, allow both to be Christian duties, but consider them as intended for different classes in rank or intellect. Those, they say, who have leisure or abilities, cannot be excused the task of enquiry. They must examine the evidence of Religion, and make up their minds on reasonable grounds. But the poor, the weak, and the busy, must (as is supposed)

take their faith entirely upon trust from those who know better.

Now, in opposition to this way of speaking, the text expressly, and the whole of Scripture by implication, teaches, that both rational enquiry and implicit faith are in some sense duties of universal constant obligation. "Prove all things," with a sober, deliberate purpose of holding fast that which is good: *that* is rational enquiry. "Hold fast that which is good," having first duly searched and proved it: *that* is implicit faith. It is evident from the very construction of the sentence, that the same persons are the object of both these maxims: and we have before seen that they are, one as well as the other, addressed to every Christian whatever.

Further: it is clear, that the process denoted by the term "proving all things," is one which does not require, though it may with advantage employ, the resources of human learning: otherwise it could not be imposed upon all Christians alike. It is of great consequence to be thoroughly aware of this: especially for those, who are in any way entrusted with the spiritual care of others. Because if they do not bear this in mind, they will be sure both to judge unfairly of individuals, and to form a wrong estimate of the general condition of the Church.

With regard to individuals, the common error

appears to be, expecting too much of the learned and requiring too little of the unlearned. For whatever be the natural tendency of knowledge itself, so many temptations are called into action in the course of acquiring it, and still more in the display, which is necessary in order to make it useful to others, that it can hardly be considered, upon the whole, more of an advantage towards the practice of piety, than riches or honours or high birth. And therefore, when persons of large intellectual attainments are perceived to be erroneous in faith, or worldly in conduct, any thoughts of censure, which may pass through our minds, should be qualified with the recollection of the disadvantage they lay under: especially in an age and nation, characterised perhaps beyond all others by a feverish thirst after knowledge for its own sake. On the same principle, it is a point of sound wisdom to be less sanguine, than first impressions would make us, about the success of plans for the general diffusion of knowledge: even of that which is most truly called *Christian* knowledge. I do not mean that such plans are likely to fail in their *immediate* object. Knowledge is, no doubt, daily and hourly increasing, by the laborious exertions of the "many," who are continually "running to and fro" in order to promote and diffuse it⁸. But we must endeavour not to be

⁸ Dan. xii. 4.

disheartened, if we fail to perceive a corresponding progress in holiness : considering that the noblest gifts of God have ever been found liable to the most dangerous abuses.

On the other hand, the recollection, that “proving all things” is as much the duty of the unlearned, as it is of the educated, should make us less afraid to trust them with reasoning, than in matters of this sort we commonly are. Almighty God, in His Church and in His Scriptures, deals with all men—the richest and poorest—alike ; as with reasonable creatures ; beings who can, if they will, make up their own minds upon sufficient grounds, concerning their duty and the way to please Him. Whereas we often shrink from exhibiting the truth, in any thing like an argumentative form, to poor unlearned people, under a notion that they cannot follow reasoning. But it might be well to consider, whether the same persons would not, somehow or other, contrive to follow a train of reasoning equally intricate, if it terminated in any point of importance to their worldly interest. If they could and would do so, clearly the fault of their not receiving instruction may in part rest with them, and not with their teachers only. Neither is it to be immediately concluded, that no good is done, because people do not choose at the time to attend, or be the better for our labours. Good, though we seldom know how, is certainly

done, whenever the truths of the Gospel are clearly laid before men, whether they regard them duly or no. At least, the whole history of God's dealings with mankind is a proof that it is His will such disclosures should be made and forwarded by us, as extensively as possible. The event must be left in His hands. But natural piety assures us, that where God's will is done, there good, sooner or later, must be the result.

The text suggests the farther remark, that what we usually call "the *right*," had better perhaps be called the *duty*, "of personal judgment in matters of faith." Properly understood, it is far more of a task than a privilege: so great are the interests at stake, and so many the chances of going wrong. It is told of the learned and pious Hammond, that "of all other things, he most disliked the being left to make a choice, and greatly applauded the state of subjection to a superior, where an obsequious diligence was the main ingredient of duty^h." A just notion of things might possibly incline men to extend this sentiment into their theological enquiries, and rather choose to be guided, if they safely might, than have to select opinions and rules of conduct for themselves. Nor can we ever be thankful enough, that in respect of all the chief dogmatical truths of Christianity, all of which the Apostle spake when he

^h Bp. Fell's Life of Hammond, p. xxvii. fol. tom. 1.

said, "Though we, or an Angel from Heaven, teach any other, let him be anathema"—in respect of these, we are strictly guided and limited. It is our privilege and safeguard, part of our joy and crown, as members of the Holy Catholic Church.

But in other matters, since so much is left to us, whether we will or no: since it is the condition of our being in this world, to walk by faith and probable conjecture, not by sight or perfect demonstration: since we have all one and the same business, to be gradually growing in the knowledge of those truths, which most concern our own everlasting happiness: it is natural and reasonable for us, while we judge as we best may for ourselves, yet to sympathise one with another, like comrades in the same march, or adventurers on the same voyage. We should endeavour to understand one another's condition; the learned not to underrate the capacities of the ignorant, the ignorant to make due allowance for the prejudices and temptations of the learned. These cautions being well observed, we shall find much less difference, than might be expected, between two sincere men, the most unequal in rank and education, in their power of appreciating divine and moral instructions.

If now it be enquired, what that test is, which renders every man, who chooses honestly to apply it, so competent yet so independent a judge of the

most important truths of all: on this also the words of the text, concise as it is, convey all the information that we can need. "Hold fast that which is good"—τὸ καλὸν, not τὸ ἀληθές—not "what is true in speculation," but "what is, in morality, fit and right." Of which all persons must, we know, be qualified to judge, because all are called on to practise it; and on which, evidently, the sincerest and best, not the most ingenious, enquirer, is surest to decide aright. So that this passage, which appears at first to contradict the sufficiency of implicit Faith, turns out to be, in fact, the strongest recommendation of it. If it only directed enquiry in general, it might occasion some perplexity. But limiting the enquiry as it does, to a point obviously within the reach of all honest men of ordinary capacities, it affords a clear warrant for the assent, which such are invariably found to yield to Catholic Truth, when fairly laid before them.

Our Blessed Saviour Himself had taken care, in the very beginning of His ministry, to leave His Church full instructions on this point. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. *Ye shall know them by their fruits*¹."

The term ψευδοπρόφηται is here evidently analogical. In its primitive acceptation it denotes

¹ St. Matt. vii. 15, 16.

not merely false *teachers*, but false *pretenders to supernatural knowledge*, such as false teachers in the Old Testament, and under the Jewish theocracy, must usually have been. For then, as the ordinary messengers of God were inspired, those who took on themselves the office must of course have affected inspiration also. But here, as is usual in the prophetic parts of the New Testament, the term is applied to the corresponding class of persons, soon to arise in the Christian Church: i. e. to all propagators of false doctrine, whether claiming miraculous powers or no. Such, our Saviour tells us, are to be known by their fruits.

Now He must mean, either their own bad conduct; or the pernicious tendency, or pernicious effect, of the doctrine they taught.

But He could not mean the bad conduct of the teachers themselves, because unhappily all experience shews us, that the soundest and most orthodox principles are but too consistent with the worst practices. And He said to Judas, as unreservedly as to any other of the Apostles, “He that receiveth you, receiveth Me^j.” Bad conduct therefore in an orthodox teacher, how hateful and deplorable soever, cannot entitle him to the epithet *ψευδοπρόφητης*: for it neither annuls his commission, nor falsifies his doctrine. Nor, on the other hand, will good conduct, at least such as human

^j St. Matt. x. 40.

eyes can discern, afford a sufficient argument that a man's faith is in the right : for this reason among others ; that the very sense of doubtfulness and paradox, singularity and novelty, a feeling often connected with lurking error, in many cases has a tendency to make people more circumspect. In others again, natural good impulses do much towards correcting the effects of monstrous and immoral doctrines, and rendering men happily inconsistent with themselves.

It follows, that the term "fruits," in our Saviour's warning, means something different from the personal character of the Teacher. Indeed the analogy of itself would suggest as much. For since the question is concerning the soundness of doctrine, not the integrity of the man, it must be the fruits of the doctrine, not of the man, to which appeal would naturally be made.

But here again a question arises, What are, properly speaking, the fruits of the doctrine? Does our Saviour mean the actual effects which it has produced in the world, or its natural and legitimate tendency, if fairly acted upon? Here also the perverseness and inconsistency of mankind will not leave us long to seek for an answer. It is but too manifest, that in all ages the best truths have been so abused, as to shelter and encourage the worst practices. If there be any one temper more hateful than another to Almighty God, more frequently and awfully denounced, and surer to draw

down His heaviest curses upon the Church or the individual chargeable with it, that temper is Hypocrisy; the knowledge of God without the love of Him. But the very notion of Hypocrisy, as the word is used in Scripture, implies, to a considerable degree, Orthodoxy. The Pharisees were the straitest^k, i. e. the most orthodox, sect of the Jews in our Saviour's time. Never was the whole body of the nation so free from idolatry, so fondly attached to the law of Moses. Never, in the worst times of their idolatry, was God so deeply displeased with them. We must not dare then to judge of doctrines by their apparent actual effects, lest we be driven to the blasphemy of charging the Mosaic Law, the gift of God Himself, with all the guilt of the Pharisees.

Nay more: our Lord and His Prophets are continually warning us, that the very Gospel itself, humanly speaking, will produce results which would compel us, on such a supposition, to reject it. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay, but rather division^l." And if we will believe the constant witness of the Prophets, we must make up our minds to see iniquity abounding, and the love of God dying away, at the very same time that the Gospel is preached most extensively; and, as far as outward profession and speculative assent go, most successfully also^m.

^k Acts xxvi. 5. cf. Phil. iii. 5. ^l St. Luke xii. 51.

^m See particularly St. Matt. xxiv. 12—14. Dan. xii. 1, 4.

Ultimately indeed, if ever we come to view the full effects of the Christian Revelation, private as well as public, on the heart as well as on the visible conduct, in the next world as well as in this; doubtless we shall perceive, that in despite of bad Angels and bad men, it has done good, infinitely beyond comparison with the evils which now meet our view. This, however, is as yet matter of faith, not of sight.

But if the test last proposed, viz. the visible effect, fail as applied to the Christian religion generally, it cannot be safely applied to any particular doctrine or part of that religion.

It follows, that when our Lord spoke of knowing false Prophets by their fruits, He meant neither their own lives, nor the lives of their followers, but the genuine tendencies of their teaching, supposing it fairly interpreted, and followed up in practice. I put out of the question here the great verities of the Christian faith, recognised by consent of all Churches, and registered in their Creeds. For these are like the first truths of natural religion; implicitly to be received at all risks; not to be judged of, but to be made a measure for judging of others. Of these we are to make no controversy: but concerning all minor points, I understand our Lord's maxim to be, If a doctrinal view, or an interpretation of Scripture, on the best consideration you can give it, tend really to deepen faith in those great foundation articles,

and otherwise to promote holiness and humility, to disengage you from the world, to “make sin more exceeding sinful,” then act as if it were true, and you are safe. If it contradict that which was from the beginning; if it lower the standard of morality, or encourage men to take liberties; if it engender spiritual pride, and a conceit of God’s especial favour; be sure it is not of God: it will not stand the proof: it must be let go, if you will hold fast that which is good.

It may perhaps be objected, that the characteristic here proposed as the test of disputed doctrine is itself as finely marked, and as difficult to ascertain, as any of the truths that are to be tried by its means. To judge of the true tendency of a doctrine requires, it may be said, no common degree of natural acuteness, aided by large stores of experience. For every ordinary hearer to be encouraged to attempt it, may seem like trusting one unskilled in chemistry with the most delicate processes of the laboratory. Nothing but fallacy, or at best only random truth, can be reasonably expected from such an allowance.

Any one who should argue in this manner would need to be reminded of this great difference (amongst others) between practical questions in morality and religion, and all investigations merely technical: that the experience, which guides us to the truth in arts and trades, is of course confined

to the few who practise them ; but the experience, which teaches us the way to be happy, is constantly growing in every man, whatever be his faculties or opportunities. Rich and poor, learned and ignorant, are completely on a level in that respect.

In the next place, we must take into our account the great quickness and subtlety, which men of the most ordinary parts frequently attain to, in regard of some one favourite subject. By continually bending all their faculties and exertions that one way, they come in time to a surprising readiness in connecting all other things with it, and discerning the remotest bearings which they can by possibility have upon it. Just as some savage tribes, not otherwise remarkable for quickness of perception, are reported to distinguish the beasts of chace, which form their chief support, at an almost incredible distance, and where a less practised eye would never be able to detect them. It is not surely past belief, that any one among Christians, however deficient in human learning or argumentative skill, might be able, through a similar attention to the great end of life, to see his way safely, if not clearly or comfortably, through all the mazes of error and disputation.

In one respect, such a person would even have the advantage of those, who, with no greater natural endowments, were placed more within reach of instruction. He would be less perplexed with

those varieties of evidence on the different sides of a question, which multiply the chances of apparent inconsistency, and render it more difficult to strike the balance between conflicting opinions. His single enquiry would be, Does this doctrine, or does it not, tend to confirm me in the love of God and my neighbour ; in doing as I would be done by ; in renouncing the world, and denying myself ? And it cannot be thought, that having his mind constantly bent on such things, he would ever be much perplexed about the answer, or materially misled by it.

One thing which makes the generality of reasoners afraid to trust themselves or others in this mode of enquiry, is their habit of confounding the actual effects of any doctrine with its genuine natural tendencies. To most men it is a far pleasanter task, to watch the apparent result of an opinion or system of belief upon other people's conduct, than to sit down and consider fairly, what effect, in all reason, their believing it ought to have upon themselves. Accordingly, whenever mention is made of judging of a doctrine by its tendency, such as are not in the habit of thinking very accurately, take you to mean its real result, as visible in the lives of its maintainers. A criterion of which considerate men are with the best reason exceedingly jealous : it having been, at all times, the prevailing artifice of error and heresy, especially error of the fanatical cast, to appeal to the good conduct of their

followers, and to the wickedness or carelessness of orthodox believers.

On the other hand, to judge properly of the tendencies of a doctrine, merely from the doctrine itself, without knowing its history, implies that one is used to consider one's own opinions and principles, in good earnest, as matter of *practice*. In this mainly seems to have consisted that guilelessness, which received such an approving welcome from our Blessed Lord in the case of Nathanael: the exact contrary to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. But being, it is to be feared, a very uncommon fairness of mind, we cannot easily bring ourselves to give other people credit for it; or to allow it, where it does exist, that authority in controversies of faith, to which it is reasonably entitled.

But the strongest scruples must give way to experiment. By way therefore of completing our view of this matter, let us now institute what may be called an experiment upon it, by just turning our thoughts, of course very briefly, towards three or four of the most important points, which are debated among persons professing and calling themselves Christians. Divesting ourselves, for a moment, of all impressions received from other kinds of evidence, let us endeavour to consider these points with an eye to nothing but their practical tendency. It will be seen, I think, not only that the most primitive view of them, in each

case, is also the most favourable to good morals and unaffected piety: but likewise, that this tendency is so direct and obvious, that it could not pass unobserved by any one, who should conduct his enquiries in that honest, practical way, which we have been now supposing.

To help us in this examination, it will be convenient to distinguish the various forms of error in regard of doctrine—against all of which, as we believe, the text offers a sure and simple remedy—into four classes, corresponding to the four Commandments of the First Table of the Decalogue. Of course, we understand those Commandments spiritually, and interpret them by the aid of the New Testament.

On this plan of exposition, the meaning of the first Commandment, with its preface, will stand as follows. As the Israelites were forbidden to have any God, except Jehovah, Who brought them out of the land of Egypt, so Christians must not seek for happiness in any but Him, to Whom they stand indebted for redemption from eternal death, and sanctification to eternal life. This first Commandment, then, is a warning not only against open infidelity, but also against that more subtle apostasy, which would substitute another notion of God for the Jehovah of the Bible, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the holy Trinity in the adorable Unity.

The second, in like manner, may be considered

as an authoritative condemnation of those errors, which substitute any other Mediator, any other way of coming to God and happiness, in the place of our only Teacher and Saviour, Christ Jesus.

Again; since swearing by the name of any being is used in Holy Scripture to denote acknowledging his Godhead; taking God's Name in vain may be understood, in a wider sense than it generally is, as comprehending all nominal, hypocritical conformity to the true religion.

And lastly; since the Jewish sabbath was confessedly meant as a type of that better rest, which remained for the people of God; that is, of the condition of baptized Christians; it is reasonable to regard the fourth Commandment as a caution to all such, that they remember their own privileges—remember how blessed their condition is, and keep it holy accordingly: not waiting for any further conversion or regeneration—not excusing defects in moral goodness by any supposed want of grace, nor in any way going back to the slavery and imperfection of the Law, or of their natural state.

Under these four heads, of apostasy, false mediators, nominal Christianity, and depreciation of Gospel privileges, may be classed, if I mistake not, all heresies and material errors in regard of the doctrinal part of religion. If therefore it can be shewn, that the rule of trying doctrines by their tendencies would sufficiently protect us against

either of these, we need not fear to act on it ourselves, or to recommend it to others, as a safe universal rule.

With regard to the first class of errors, it will be sufficient to repeat the answer usually and justly made to those, who look upon the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity as a mere speculative position. He who believes the Almighty God to have become incarnate, and to have died to do away with the cause of sin, must in reason feel a deeper horror of sin and its consequences, than could be excited by the voluntary death of any prophet or martyr, or even angel. And He who knows the Eternal Spirit of God to be personally close to him, as an ever-present Friend, to watch every thought, word, and action, prompting to all good, and checking all evil—knows a truth, which ought surely to impress him with the peculiar, mysterious interest which God takes in his doings, more strongly even than the belief in His omnipresence: the moral tendency of which no partizan of mere natural religion can deny.

To this may be added, that the doctrine of the Incarnation opens a way for all our best human affections to interest themselves more immediately on behalf of religion. We are sure now that we may understand the Bible quite literally, when it speaks of God's sympathizing with us: Christ Himself having declared His willingness to feel towards us as towards brethren and sisters and

mothers : and consequently inviting and encouraging us to cultivate the corresponding affections towards Him. Whatever, therefore, is taken away from the Catholic doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, is so much taken away from the love and fear of God : the necessary foundation of all sound morality.

Next, with regard to those errors, which affect our faith in one only Mediator : and which, as I suppose, bear the same relation to the second Commandment, that Apostasy and Socinianism do to the first. Whatever withdraws our minds from the Cross of Christ, to fix them on any thing else as the meritorious cause of our pardon and salvation ; or from participation of Christ, as the one efficient cause, whereby His merits are made available to us ; whether it be a personal agent, a saint or angel, or a mere phantom of our own supposed merit, to which we are invited to look :—either way, the favour and forgiveness of God is made infinitely a cheaper thing, and the offence of sin in the same degree extenuated. We are no longer led distinctly to refer all our hopes of happiness to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, applied to ourselves : consequently, we are not so incessantly called upon to imitate that sacrifice in our lives—to be made (as the Apostle words it) “ conformable to His deathⁿ,” by suffering and self-denial. Where the Atonement is denied, or explained away, this

ⁿ Philipp. iii. 10.

evil tendency is of course most palpable. But no doubt it is also to be discerned in those cases, (if any such there be,) where the reconciling efficacy of our Saviour's blood is acknowledged entire, and only His office as Intercessor intruded upon. In either case, there is, as it were, "a graven image" set up: an unscriptural, unauthorized medium of communication between God and man is resorted to: an imperfect standard is placed before us, instead of the divine and unblemished Jesus: and (what is of chief moment in morality, and mainly distinguishes the true religion from Heathenism) there is no longer an *unity* in our religious thoughts and feelings; our faith, hope, and charity, are not *undivided*: how then can our practice be altogether steady and consistent?

Proceeding to the third class of errors, above specified, and designated by the phrase "nominal Christianity," or taking God's Name falsely upon one's self, I need not surely point out, how impossible it is for any thing of this kind to stand the trial proposed by St. Paul. Of all heresies, Antinomianism is the last, which could ever recommend itself to the conscience of any plain honest believer, as a doctrine fit to be held fast because of its moral goodness. Although it bid fair to become, in one shape or another, the most prevailing error of any, yet it will least of any bear to be argued upon: the case concerning it, both from Scripture and Reason, being so very plain.

I will not therefore now dwell on it, but will just explain, in the fourth and last place, how our rule, of judging doctrines by their tendency, may be exactly applied to the detection of such errors, as were typified, in Jewish times, by neglect of the Sabbath—such as lead men to depreciate the privileges of the visible Church.

Let us, for example, suppose a considerate unbiassed man, acting steadily by this rule, to have the following statement, for the first time, presented to his mind: that although the offers of grace by the Gospel are addressed to all Christians, they are to be understood with limitation to those only, who are especial objects of His favour—who constituting a certain number, foreseen and decreed by the Almighty, shall be saved, as it were in spite of themselves, out of an evil world: while to the rest, for all the declarations of the Church, and the language of Scripture, no mercy was ever intended, no grace ever given. Lay this before a sincere, sober-minded person, who never heard of it before, and see if he will not answer, This *must* be wrong, for it takes away the use of good works.

Let the same person be asked again, Whether strong feelings, returns of prayer, or any thing approaching to sensible impulses of God's Holy Spirit, are necessary, or always desirable, as signs of a state of grace. Will not his reply be, "All these things are mere matter of comfort: to expect them,

is to expect our reward in this world : at any rate, they take off a man's attention from the calm and steady performance of his duties : and therefore it must be best to think as little as possible of them, one way or the other?"

Many more instances might be given. But these may suffice by way of specimen, and will readily enable any one, who thinks the argument worth pursuing, to supply more for himself. Only I am tempted, at the risk of going too much into detail, to produce one additional example of the utility of the proposed test : viz. that it furnishes, practically, a short but satisfactory way of settling the controversy concerning the Christian Ministry. That which is good, *καλὸν*, conformable to one's natural feelings of propriety, veneration, and affection, in such a matter, is surely for men to take too little upon themselves, rather than too much. If there are any, who seem to have Christ's transmitted warrant for the ministerial prerogatives they exercise, while another class is so circumstanced, that the most they can say is, "We mean well, and have good hope that we are not intruding upon the priest's office;" common sense bids us "hold fast" by the communion of the former, in preference to that of the latter. And this the more earnestly, the more we value the blessings they are empowered to dispense : which again will depend upon our sense of eternal things, the horror we feel at our own manifold trans-

gressions, and our anxiety to keep as near to our Saviour as we can.

To have touched here on the question of the Ministry may be excusable, because so many of those, who think and talk of such subjects, seem either to undervalue it altogether, or to rest their anxiety about it on grounds comparatively inadequate. They are content to plead the ill effects of swerving from the established order of things; the heresy, which is apt to follow on schism; and the like: arguments of great weight in themselves, but less availing than they might be, from our neglecting to support them, openly and fearlessly, with the plain and brief consideration, what the love of Christ, and respect for Him as our common Master, would suggest at first thought.

Besides, this last application exemplifies a very general and important use of the Apostolic principle of interpretation, on which I have been enlarging: viz. that where the Church is silent, it is one of the best helps in determining what is important in discussions about religion, and what may be as well passed over. Nothing in the whole world is really important, except so far as it may be brought to bear upon religion. This is the dictate of reason to every one who believes a future state of retribution. Nothing in religion itself is important, except so far as it may be brought to bear upon practice. This is the uniform tenor of the Bible, and of the Church's dogmatical decisions; and it

is pronounced, with peculiar emphasis, in the words of the text. Let us endeavour to regulate, not only our studies, but our lives, by this divine rule: remembering that it may be violated more ways than one. The theologian, who exerts himself on matters of mere curiosity, may lose his time and labour: but the Christian, who contemplates the most profitable subjects without exerting himself to profit by them, loses his chance of happiness for ever.

“ Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.”

SERMON IV.*

INIQUITY ABOUNDING.

ST. MATT. xxiv. 12.

. . . *iniquity shall abound.*

THAT such mournful occasions as the present should continue to recur, year after year, in a Christian country; with symptoms apparently unmitigated by the progress which knowledge and refinement have for so long a time confessedly been making—this cannot but excite very serious and awful reflections in those, who are disposed to regard life in a religious point of view, and not to let things pass unthought of, only because they are frequent and familiar.

Indeed, if men will childishly look on these solemnities only as pageants, without intending to be at all the better for them—or if they take up

* Preached at the Lent Assize, St. Mary's, Oxford, March 6, 1823.

with the narrow and short-sighted views of the mere worldly politician respecting them—it is no wonder if they go away, as under the same disposition of mind they go away from public worship, not the better, but the worse, for their attendance on it.

For the administration of justice, of criminal justice particularly, in the graver cases, is in many respects not unlike the public worship of God. To His especial presence there is constant appeal made in the one as well as in the other. In proportion as men allow themselves to attend on either out of mere levity or curiosity, they run a risk of hardening their own consciences, and deadening their sense of right and wrong^b. And though public worship, of the two, be the more immediately concerned with men's eternal welfare, yet, if the administration of justice have any thing at all to do with it, however incidentally and indirectly, it is surely as real an offence against reason to leave another world out of sight on these occasions, as it would be to confine one's estimate of the purposes of social worship to bare external decency, and the peace and order of civil society.

It is an absurdity, too, particularly unworthy of refined and educated minds. For they ought ever to be distinguished by taking the largest

^b Cf. Butler's Analogy, p. 1. c. 5. p. 116. Oxf. Ed. 1807.

views, and selecting what is most important, in every subject, as matter of chief consideration.

Considering, then, in this enlarged way of thinking, the abundance of crimes and lawsuits, so far as it is indicative, not now of the civil and social, but of the spiritual, condition of our age; considering it as one instance of "iniquity abounding" among us; we may find ourselves engaged in a train of thought, not only melancholy, but at first sight also perplexing.

For "what," it may be enquired, "is, after all, the great benefit of Christianity? It came into the world, professing to bring with it a sovereign remedy for all the diseases of our moral nature. It has now been among men for eighteen hundred years, and the world seems, on a large view of it, to be much about where it was^c. Some degrading customs may be obsolete, some brutish vices discountenanced. But the temper of men in general seems as worldly and selfish, as far from true goodness and happiness, as ever. How," it may be asked, "are such things consistent with the claim advanced in the Gospel to superior knowledge of 'what was in man,' and to the praise of being exactly adapted to his nature? or with what we are told of the temper and conduct of those, who first gave in their names to the Christian institution?"

Such thoughts as these may indeed make a

^c Cf. Miller's Bampton Lectures, pp. 71—76, 129—131.

Christian sorrowful, and ought to render him very circumspect. But he need not be long perplexed by them. For it may, without much difficulty, be shewn, that the very depravity, by which the Church is overrun, and by which unbelievers would startle and confound her advocates, furnishes, in fact, an irrefragable argument for her divine authority as the representative of our Blessed Lord. It was the great subject of His own express prophecy: and that prophecy so peculiar in its tone and circumstances, as to be distinguished, not only from casual coincidences, or sagacious glances at futurity, but also from all *inspired* predictions ever delivered by mere men.

Some perhaps may be inclined to doubt, whether it is correct to speak of the iniquity of *our own* times as having been within the immediate contemplation of our Saviour, when He delivered the prophecy in the text. I would just observe, therefore, that the general argument on which I am about to enter, as well as many of the practical conclusions, to which the whole enquiry may give rise, will be found to stand unaffected by such a difference of interpretation.

But, indeed, it is hardly possible to explain this chapter of St. Matthew consistently, without considering it as a general description of the latter times, or days of the Messiah: i. e. of the whole period of time from the first promulgation of

Christianity to the end of the world. The destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, the first great event of the New Dispensation, is brought prominently forward, to be, as it were, a voucher for the correctness of the whole representation, to such as lived in those times. And therefore it is given with more of detail, than any other part of the prophecy: so that when it should come to pass, the men of that generation, beholding the wonderful agreement of the event with the prediction, might be forced to confess, that all was indeed being fulfilled, exactly as Jesus Christ had foretold^d. The destruction therefore of Jerusalem stands in order of time rather as the beginning, than as the termination, of this awful prophecy.

In support of this it should be considered, that the prediction, when first delivered, was a private one: not heard by the Jewish nation, but by four only of the chosen Apostles^e. We must then look upon it as addressed to Christians, not to Jews. And one should expect it to turn principally upon

^d Cf. v. 34. in which, on any interpretation of the prophecy, (except it be wholly *confined* to the destruction of Jerusalem,) the phrase *πάντα ταῦτα* must mean “this entire state of things,” rather than “each particular thing mentioned.” See S. Chrys. in loc. who explains *γενεὰ* to mean “this kind of generation;” a constant succession of believers: “οἶδε γὰρ γενεὰν οὐκ ἀπὸ χρόνου χαρακτηρίζειν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τρόπου θρησκείας καὶ πολιτείας.”

^e St. Mark xiii. 3.

the fortunes of Christianity, not to terminate in those of the Jewish Church.

The question likewise of the Apostles, to which it was an answer, referred primarily indeed to the downfall of the temple, but principally to the establishment and fortunes of the New Dispensation. "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

The Apostles seem to have imagined, not unnaturally, that when once the Jewish city and temple were destroyed, the old things passed away, and the days of the Messiah begun, all would be peace, righteousness, and mercy, and the sin and miseries of mankind would cease for ever. Jesus Christ, therefore, is careful to explain to them, on this as on many other occasions, that although they judged quite rightly of the natural and essential tendencies of the Gospel, they were greatly mistaken as to its real results in this world. "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to divide a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household^f." On

^f St. Matt. x. 34—37. coll. St. Luke xi. 49, 51—53. Perhaps what is said of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and the accompanying parable of the relapsed dæmoniac, in that chapter of St. Luke, and in the 12th of St. Matthew, has some reference of this kind.

another occasion, when the approaching reign of the Messiah had been the topic of discourse with the Pharisees; He turned to His disciples with an admonition, well calculated to check any too sanguine expectations, which the bare mention of His reign would be likely to excite within them. “^s Days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man,” (i. e. to recall the times when I was with you visibly on earth,) “and shall not see it.” “As the days of Noe were, and as the days of Lot were, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man.” He will not shew Himself again, till the world is sunk into such a state of irreligion and iniquity, as can only be paralleled by the sinners just before the flood, or by Sodom before the fire and brimstone fell upon it from heaven.

It is reasonable to understand this later and not less solemn denunciation, of which the text forms a part, as addressed in great measure to the same state of mind in His Apostles. “You think all is going to be rectified, and the world to become a Paradise again. But I forewarn you to expect no such thing. There will still be false Christs, i. e. false religions, wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, troubles in the world at large: and what is worse, and more contrary to

^s St. Luke xvii. 17—37: continued, apparently, with special reference to the duties most essential in an apostate world, in c. xviii. 1—14.

your expectations, there will not only be persecution against the Church from without, but all sorts of apostasy and iniquity within. Then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another: and many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of the many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come." The whole, I say, of the prophecy down to this point, appears to convey a general description of the latter times, or days of the Messiah, intended, amongst other purposes, to counteract the too flattering hopes of the disciples: which being provided for, the direct and immediate sign of the destruction of Jerusalem, (itself possibly a type of something to precede in like manner the end of the world^b), is distinctly specified: i. e. "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place."

From this it appears, that in describing the condition of mankind under the New Dispensation, which Jesus Christ was about to bring into the world, He expressly inserted this circumstance, that in it "iniquity should abound." Iniquity, or

^b Cf. Dan. xi. 31. xii. 11. ix. 27. (coll. Es. x. 23.) and perhaps 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. N.B. also, the same caution given in St. Matt. xxiv. 16, &c. is given in St. Luke xvii. 31, &c.

transgression of the law, means sin, or immorality in general. This we know by St. John's definition: "Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law. For sin is the transgression of the lawⁱ:" *ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία*. This transgression Christ declares should be "multiplied:" the word is as strong as possible, to express almost unlimited increase and repetition^k. And it is added, that in consequence of this, "the love of many"—it should be, of "the greater part"—would "wax cold." That is, the prevailing immorality of the times would gradually extinguish charity, or the love of God, in the generality of mankind. They would no longer consent to forego their own wishes for His sake; they would no longer make it the business of their lives to please Him. And this, not from ignorance of the great things He had done for them: for it is not of dark ages that our Lord is speaking, but of times, in which "the Gospel is to be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations^l."

Now that iniquity, in this sense of plain disobedience to God's laws, does positively "abound" to a great extent among us: this seems so very evident, that one should hardly know how to go about to prove it, if it were denied. One or two

ⁱ 1 St. John iii. 4.

^k Acts vii. 17. Heb. vi. 14. 1 St. Pet. i. 2. 2 Cor. ix. 10.

^l Cf. Dan. xii. 4.

obvious considerations may however help us to form a juster estimate of the amount of that evil, which, from its being so close and familiar to us, we are sure, without very particular attention, to under-rate.

All the forms and rules of legal and commercial business imply, as much as ever they did, that mankind are, on the whole, wicked and immoral. Hardly any one dares venture his property, his reputation, or his comfort, upon the chance of a stranger's honesty or kindness, without the safeguard of human laws and punishments. That is, in other words, every one shapes his conduct, in regard to his worldly interests, upon the notion that sin and wickedness abound.

More particularly are the enemies of Christianity witnesses, that in this prediction at least, Jesus Christ spake the truth. For one of their main objections to it—an objection, for which thousands are the worse, who never advanced it as an express proposition—is this: That Christians (i. e. the majority of men, for every one is presumed to call himself a Christian, till we know to the contrary) act as immorally as if they were heathens, and therefore cannot be supposed themselves to believe what they profess.

Jesus Christ then anticipated and predicted the general failure of His Gospel, at least for a long period, in working any thing like a complete reformation even among those who should profess

it: and the event has shewn, by the confession of His adversaries themselves, that He anticipated and predicted truly.

Now it is notorious, that those who invent any project for the good of mankind, commonly entertain high hopes of the success of their inventions: at least in the outset of their career. A physician, who has discovered a new medicine—a mechanist, who has brought a new force into action—are seldom found to expect too little fruit of their labours. And it is matter of constant experience that the like holds good in those, who are the first to set on foot extensive plans for the moral and religious improvement of their fellow-creatures. They set out, almost invariably, with expecting, as was emphatically said of one of them, “to convert the world^m:” and nothing short of actual experience will undeceive them.

A generous enthusiast, therefore, could not have spoken in the tone which our Saviour uniformly adopts on this subject. It is against the very nature of enthusiasm. Still less would an impostor have thought it prudent thus openly to augur defeat.

Besides, it is clear that in either of these cases the prediction would have adapted itself to the Jewish prophecies, as they would be generally and obviously understood. Now the tone, which at first sight appears to prevail in the Jewish pro-

^m Law's Letter to J. Wesley, in Southey's Life.

phencies, whenever the reign of the Messiah is spoken of, is a tone as unlike what has been described, as can well be imagined. Consider such expressions as the followingⁿ: “Thy people also shall be all righteous.” “I will direct their work in truth, and will make an everlasting covenant with them: and their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.” “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Any anticipations which could be derived from hence, would evidently be the very reverse of iniquity abounding, and the love of the greater part waxing cold.

Concerning these and similar passages of the Old Testament, I would farther remark, that even after all the warnings of our Saviour, and after the event has gone so far towards leading us to seek another interpretation of them, they are still made to justify assertions, too sanguine, I fear, and fanciful to be of much practical use, of the actual improvement of Christendom in holiness and virtue, and of

ⁿ Is. lx. 21. lxi. 8, 9. xi. 6—9.

the apparent dawning of a state of things, even in this world, in which sin and sorrow shall be, comparatively, no more. Much more must it have appeared natural, in the time of our Saviour, to expect something like a real reformation of the world upon the establishment of the New Dispensation. These anticipations would, of course, grow more and more sanguine, as the observer came to know more and more of the perfection of the new doctrines, and also of the overpowering evidence—the mighty hand and out-stretched arm—by which they were upheld and furthered. Now, no one could be so thoroughly aware of these things—could have such entire knowledge, either of the perfection of His doctrines, or of the amount of their evidence—as our Blessed Lord Himself. And therefore His foretelling, in spite of all this, the real state of things just as we behold it, is the strongest possible proof that He was indeed a Prophet, and more than a Prophet: and that He knew, in a way peculiar to Himself, all that was in man.

I say, “in a way peculiar to Himself.” For it will appear upon consideration, that there is indeed something very peculiar in the tone of these predictions: something quite different, not only from the natural expectations of uninspired men, but also from the manner of His inspired messengers themselves, whether before or after His coming.

It is true indeed, that the more we know of

human nature, the less shall we be inclined to reckon certainly upon success in any method proposed for ameliorating it. Accordingly, we find that Socrates, the wisest, practically, of the ancient philosophers, was also, apparently, the least sanguine, openly declaring, that he did not expect men would ever be taught what was really good for them, except by an interposition from above^o; and anticipating the probable fate of a perfectly righteous man, if such should appear on earth, in the following very remarkable words^p. “ Let us suppose him (says he) doing no injury, to have on him the strongest imputation of injustice: let him not swerve even unto death, accounted unrighteous throughout his life, but being righteous. Under these circumstances, the just man will be scourged, racked, imprisoned, his eyes burned out—at last, suffering all manner of evils, will perish by a vile and tormenting death.”

It is to be observed, however, that these words were not written, till after the event had shewn, what kind of success a philosopher might expect in his benevolent efforts for the good of mankind. There is nothing to make us believe, that Socrates did not look forward hopefully, at first, to the fruit of his labours, in the reformation of his countrymen. And when he speaks of a possible divine revelation, it does not appear that he at all contem-

^o Plat. Alcib. 2. p. 150. Op. t. ii. Ed. Serrani.

^p Plat. de Rep. ii. p. 361.

plated any probability of its failing in this respect. The tone, in which that dialogue is conducted, would rather lead one to infer the contrary. Ill as his experience had taught him to think of the chance of bringing mankind to a truer sense of their own interest, it never entered his thoughts to apprehend, that an interposition even from God Himself might be so far frustrated by the wickedness of His creatures.

But the singularity of our Lord's manner of speaking on this subject will be still more evident, upon comparing it with that of former Prophets; with Moses, for instance, or with Elijah; the most remarkably gifted of them all, and therefore the fittest to be brought into comparison with Him on this argument.

No portion perhaps of the Old Testament sounds so nearly in unison with His predictions, or speaks in so calm and decided a tone of the certain falling off of those, to whom it was addressed, as do the concluding chapters of the book of Deuteronomy^a. "I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death! Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them. For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt

^a Deut. xxxi. 27—29. cf. v. 16, 20, 21.

yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you ; and evil will befall you in the latter days ; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger with the work of your hands."

But when these words were written, Moses was very old, and had been used for forty years to see his countrymen rebel against God, even in sight of His glory, and while "the meat," which they received by miracle, was yet "between their teeth." Consider him in the outset of his ministry, and before the effect of those wonderful manifestations had been tried, and he too will appear to have been sanguine at first : as indeed who would not have been, with such means as he had in his hands ? None but a sanguine person would have broken the tables of the Covenant, upon seeing the people worshipping the molten calf^r. It was the act of a man bitterly disappointed : forced to part in a moment with expectations long and fondly cherished, and, humanly speaking, not unreasonable, of seeing the fruit of God's mercy, and his own labours, in the steady obedience of his people.

Again : when God had so signally answered the prayers of Elijah by fire on mount Carmel, and the backsliders had been driven in spite of themselves to acknowledge the true God, and, what was more, to aid His minister in the slaughter of the

^r Exod. xxxii. 19.

worshippers of Baal; it was no wonder, if the Prophet expected much more lasting amendment than he found: if he felt weary of the world, and in his disappointment prayed to die, when he saw persecution and idolatry likely to be still as prosperous as ever*.

But it is indeed a wonder, and bespeaks evidently the presence of one greater than Elijah or Moses, to observe Jesus Christ, with all His miracles, and with such discoveries as He had to make, never for a moment miscalculating in the same way. There are no traces, in His demeanour, of any such revolution of thought, as most speculative men sooner or later experience, when their first visions of approaching general improvement are to be exchanged, more or less suddenly, for sadder, but more correct, and therefore (if it be not their own faults) more useful, views. He speaks sorrowfully indeed, and most affectingly, but not like one disappointed. There is no difference, in this respect, between the end of His ministry and the beginning: between His address to His own city Nazareth, where, if any where, He might fairly have depended upon doing much good, and His mournful expostulation with Jerusalem in the last week of His life. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes".

* 1 Kings xix. 4.

† St. Luke iv. 16—30. coll. c. xix. 41—44.

His calm forebodings, every now and then, of the ruinous effect, which the knowledge of the Gospel would have upon very many, sound most exceedingly awful: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." And, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." An evident allusion to the way, in which His last and greatest miracle would be generally resisted and made void, as the witness of the Old Testament had been^u.

Yet farther: the very Apostles of our Lord, after all His warnings, could hardly bring themselves to anticipate any thing like the present fallen state of the Church. The way to make this out most clearly, will be to compare their earlier with their later writings, and see which of the two exhibit most of the tone and manner of our Blessed Saviour in this respect: St. Peter's first Epistle, for instance, with his second: or St. Paul writing to the Galatians, evidently under a feeling of surprise at the introduction of a spirit of Judaism, with the same St. Paul, calmly warning the Hebrews against an approaching spirit of practical unbelief, and entire apostasy.

The second Epistle to Timothy, if carefully examined, will be found to present, in the tone of the writer, some remarkable points of difference

^u St. John iii. 19. St. Luke xvi. 31.

from the first. Both contain prophecies of “a falling away” in the latter times. But the first speaks, apparently, of avowed unbelief: “In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits.” The other, of what is far more disheartening, and less likely to be calculated on beforehand: “In the last days perilous times shall come. For,” not “some,” but “the generality of men”—*οἱ ἄνθρωποι*—“the men of those times”—“shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*.”

Both these Epistles, again, speak of individuals who had fallen away from Christ, but with a similar variation of manner. In the first Epistle, “*Some* having put away a good conscience, concerning faith have made shipwreck.” “*Some* have erred from the faith.” “*Some* have *already* turned aside after Satan:” as though it were matter of surprise. Whereas in the second Epistle, when he comes to speak of similar cases, the tone of surprise is greatly abated, and that of sorrow deepened. “This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me.” “Demas hath forsaken me, having

* 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. coll. 2 Tim. iii. 1—9.

loved this present world ;” “ At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me : I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge⁷.”

Yet even in these instances, particularly the last, how unlike is the manner of speaking to that of Jesus Christ upon such occasions ! “ Do ye now believe ? Behold, the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone.” “ Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake ? Verily I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice⁸.” The one speaks as an Omniscient Being, to whom nothing was wonderful. The other as a poor frail man, liable to be deceived, from time to time, in his best hopes and surest reckonings.

Upon this subject, of what St. Paul anticipated, I cannot forbear citing one passage, as associating itself, more immediately, with the occasion of the present solemnity. Some of the Corinthians, it seems, being at variance one with another, had brought their cause before the customary judicature of the city. St. Paul denounces this as unchristian, and this is the remonstrance which he addressed to them^a. “ Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust,” i. e. the heathens, “ and not before the

⁷ 1 Tim. i. 19. vi. 10. v. 15. coll. 2 Tim. i. 15. iv. 10, 16.

⁸ St. John xvi. 31, 32. xiii. 38.

^a 1 Cor. vi. 1—9.

saints? Do ye not know, that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers! Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren. Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?" He who writes in this strain, could he possibly have anticipated, in a country where Christianity has been long established, and in which it is an affront, to suppose a man an unbeliever—could he, I say, have anticipated such a state of things, as that of which we are witnesses? prisons so crowded, suits so numerous and various, statutes so rapidly multiplying, a large profession constantly and laboriously employed, courts almost incessantly sitting, assizes twice a year? It is plain, that no such thing ever entered into his thoughts: and if he had been to frame prophecies for himself, this was of all pictures the least likely for him to have drawn, of the times in which the Gospel should be very generally received.

One observation more, and the argument, as far as concerns the New Testament, may be regarded as tolerably complete. Let it be examined, which of all its human authors appear to have had the deepest sense of the universal degeneracy, which was to be looked for among Christians. They will appear to have been the very persons, who from birth or other causes were likely to have imbibed most of the sentiments of Jesus Christ Himself: St. James and St. Jude, who are called in Scripture His brethren; and St. John His beloved disciple. These, when they speak of approaching apostasy, speak calmly and decisively, as of a familiar, though very sorrowful, thought^b. When they recommend moral duties, they do it as men who are aware that the great majority of their hearers will devise how to slight or evade them. Every where they assume, that those to whom they address themselves know the truth, and that it is but the plain common sense of doing their duty, in which they are deficient^c. They, therefore, lay their danger before them, not as though they reckoned upon doing much good by it, but as if it were their best and only chance of doing any. This, though not without exception, is the prevailing tone of the three brethren of our Lord. But it is, I think, uniformly and without

^b 1 S. John ii. 18. iv. 3, 5. 2 S. John 7, 8. S. Jude 4, 17, 18.

^c e. g. S. James i. 13, 22. ii. 12, 14. 1 S. John ii. 29. iii. 7, 18. iv. 20. v. 18—21. 2 S. John 5, 6. 3 S. John 11. S. Jude 3, 20, 21.

exception, the tone of our Blessed Lord Himself, in His public ministrations. //

The falsehood, then, of our religion—the fraud or enthusiasm of its Author—is the very last conclusion, to which a reasonable man would be led, upon considering the abundance of iniquity in the Christian world. On the contrary, things have been so ordered, that the very degeneracy of the Church is bearing, at this moment, the strongest possible testimony to the divine authority of Jesus Christ. For in it a prophecy is accomplishing before our eyes, so unlike what could have been expected when it was first delivered, that His own friends and apostles, as we have now seen, could hardly bring themselves to receive it; and do not seem to have apprehended its full import, even when they repeated it themselves.

To find fault, therefore, with the Gospel, as many do, for not having made men better than they are, is to find fault with it for not having done that, which its Founder never expected it would do: nay, that in which He expressly predicted its failure.

If men will go on to ask, How these things should be? how we can possibly reconcile it to infinite wisdom and goodness, that so large a portion of the world should be in that strange and frightful condition, which is implied in the words, “immoral Christian;”—with a God, a Saviour, and a judgment to come, known and believed by almost

all in theory, and, almost as universally, slighted in practice:—the same account may be given of this, as of the permission of moral evil in general: that we cannot possibly be competent judges, how far it may conduce towards carrying on some greater scheme of Divine Wisdom, of which we, and all our concerns, form only a subordinate part. And we may apply, particularly, to the present subject, what Bishop Butler has remarked on this whole class of difficulties: “It is not impossible, that men’s shewing and making manifest, what is in their heart, what their real character is, may have respect to a future life, in ways and manners which we are not acquainted with: particularly it may be a means (for the Author of Nature does not appear to do any thing without means) of their being disposed of suitably to their characters; and of its being known to the creation, by way of example, that they are thus disposed of^d.”

But whether this, or any other, be accepted, as a probable, though imperfect, solution of present appearances, (and surely any thing is more probable than Atheism): it is clear that the difficulty, as far as it respects the Scripture, is entirely done away with, when it is seen, that the Scriptures themselves recognise and imply the very same state of things, which seems so unaccountable at first. There are some passages, which appear to represent it in this particular point of view: viz. as a

^d Anal. p. i. c. 5. Works, Oxford, 1807. vol. ii. p. 145.

cause of mental perplexity to speculative and curious men. Possibly the expression, “*Mystery of Iniquity*,” used so significantly in one place, may have respect to something of this kind. It seems to be set in opposition to the *Mystery of Godliness*: the one standing for the whole of what God would do to save mankind; the other, for the whole of what they would do to ruin themselves: and the word *Mystery* giving us to understand, that there would be something, at first sight, startling and unaccountable, something contrary to all human speculations, in the one as well as in the other.

To conclude: It being morally demonstrable, as I am persuaded it is upon a general view of Scripture, (whatever may be thought of the aptitude of particular citations,) that we are living in the times, are ourselves among the persons, concerning whom these prophecies were delivered—this is indeed a thought, not hastily to be dismissed from the mind of any reasonable person. If a man knew on good authority, that Jesus Christ did, at such and such a time, make mention of the particular date and place of His own birth, declaring also that all persons, then and there born, would live in peculiar danger; in “a perilous time;” in “days which must be shortened, or no flesh could be saved;” would it not be a very pressing call upon that man, to walk in fear and trembling; to mistrust appearances, and the judgment of the

* 2 Thess. ii. 7. cf. Rev. xvii. 5.

world; to mistrust himself, and his own standard of right and wrong, and to feel no security, but in the constant exercise of humiliation, self-denial, and prayer? The words formerly addressed to one in the act of quitting a home just about to be destroyed, would very nearly describe, I should think, the temper most becoming and natural in one, who knew himself to be concerned in such a prophecy. "Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." It would be particularly unsuitable for him to allow himself to be satisfied with the praise of an age, which, he knew on such high authority, measured things by so defective a standard. He could not reasonably flatter himself, upon having observed the law of the land, or kept up a good character among his neighbours. For all this, at most, would only shew, that he was not the worst, outwardly, in a bad world. But of his progress in charity—in the love of God—in the resignation of the whole will and purpose of heart entirely to Him and His service,—it would prove absolutely nothing.

Now, whatever frame of mind would be natural and reasonable in a person so circumstanced, is natural and reasonable for every Christian living in the latter times: as much so, as if the prophecies had been addressed to each individual by name; unless we will say, that the danger is less imminent because there are so many to share in it; or that

the description does not apply to us and our times, because it is spread over so large a portion of history besides, and takes in so many who have lived before us.

These things, or something equivalent to them, may indeed and will be said. Nor does there seem much reason to hope, that any great portion of those concerned in our Lord's warning, will ever be brought to see their own defection and danger in the just and true light. Warning has been long ago given, that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." And there is a sort of blinding power in this moral disease, which makes the result but too probable, even were it not matter of prophecy. Men cannot comprehend their own perils, because, being more and more used to self-indulgence, they cannot perceive how it should be so ruinous as it is: much on the same principle that the Saints, entering most into the mind of Him Who was alone without sin, have all along been most thoroughly enabled to discern clearly from the beginning, and state as matter of course, the full amount of the mischief it would do.

Meanwhile it is infinitely important to observe, that great and near as the danger surely is, it is, as surely, in each individual's own power to escape from it if he will. As an earnest of which, we see it is wonderfully ordered, that the visible Church

* 2 Tim. iii. 13.

of Christ should still continue among us according to His promise, in the full enjoyment of all the means of grace, and generally acknowledged even by those, whose lives are most adverse to the Gospel. And, as far as we can see, there is as little chance of its ever being extinguished, as there is of its members ever becoming, generally, such as they profess and ought to be.

Let us recollect also, that we have to do with a good and gracious Father, Who has promised in one instance, and will doubtless perform it in all, that “if there be first a willing mind,”—a sincere alacrity in doing His will,—He will accept it “according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not^f.” We may hope that a less degree of positive holiness, if it were the very best a man could attain to, under his circumstances, may be as richly crowned hereafter, as a greater progress would have been in better and less seducing times. It ought not to need remarking, that this is said to prevent despondency, not to encourage sloth and self-indulgence.

Finally: If there be any one temper of mind, which suits better than others with so awful a situation as Christians are now placed in, it is the temper of perfect resignation and singleness of purpose: a constant inward appeal, as it were, from a bad and seducing world to a good God, Who cannot flatter or deceive us. These dispositions

^f 2 Cor. viii. 12.

will carry us through all our duties, whether public or private, with the least possible countenance to the prevailing degeneracy; and with as much real inward satisfaction, as can prudently be looked for in the present state of things: thankfully remembering, that the very same persons, among whom it was foretold, "Iniquity should abound," and "the love of the generality wax cold," are also those for whose benefit the gracious promise was added, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

SERMON V.^a

DANGER OF SYMPATHISING WITH REBELLION.

ROM. i. 20.

Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

THE temper described in this verse is the worst form of moral degradation ; consisting not so much in want of principle, as in principles positively bad and ruinous. Which distinction is more clearly marked in the original by the use of the two verbs *ποιεῖν* and *πράττειν*. “ The civilized and enlightened heathen ”—so the Apostle seems to say—“ were fully aware of the sentence, the judicial sentence of God Almighty, declaring that such as practise (*οἱ πράσσοντες*) outrageous immoralities, are worthy of death : yet they could find in their hearts, not only to commit those actions, (*οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσι,*) which might have happened under strong impulse, contrary to their own habitual feelings : but also

^a Preached before the University of Oxford, Jan. 30, 1831.

to consent to such as practise them, (*συνευδοκεῖν τοῖς πράσσουσι,*) to acquiesce in them thoroughly, and be well-pleased with them.”

Here, as with the finishing touch, and the darkest of all, he completes his picture of that intense depravity, from which Christ came to rescue the Gentile world: emphatically implying, that worse could not be, on this side the region of unmingled evil.

Assuredly it would be a fatal mistake, to limit this awful denunciation to those only, whose circumstances tempt them directly to participate in great and heinous crimes: or to imagine that, living as we do in an age of Christian light and instruction, we can have no great occasion to deprecate these worst excesses of heathenish wickedness. The effect on society, the immediate effect, is indeed greatly mitigated; but the effect on our own character is the same, when we have pleasure in the guilty, as such, though we cannot, or dare not, perform their worst actions. Those who are kept, so far, innocent, merely from irresolution or want of energy—which state of mind is infallibly indicated by the imagination delighting to dwell on wickedness—cannot well be conceived of as less guilty, in the eyes of an All-seeing God, than if they had been allowed to accomplish their own evil dreams. And wilfully persisting in such inward licence, for any considerable length of time, their condition may seem, in one respect, the more

dangerous for this involuntary restraint. It has less chance of being amended by outward reverses, or the reproof of others: it gives less room for the sort of reaction, which is apt to ensue on great and palpable transgressions, and to make the remorse and repentance of ardent minds as signal as their guilt had been. There is the more reason therefore, and the more mercy, in those numerous denunciations of Scripture, which represent us as partaking in other men's sins, merely by brooding over them in fancy, with any thing like indulged approbation or sympathy.

Two kinds of immorality may be named, in which, more readily perhaps than in others, men's unchastened imaginations are apt to involve them: sins of sensuality, and sins of rebellion.

For just as in the former of these two instances, reading, hearing, or seeing mischief, if the heart at all consent to it, may plunge a man in intense guilt, though shame, fear, or want of opportunity, put a bar on overt actions of sin: so it is possible, as we read history, or hear news, to learn a vicious sympathy with rebellion or oppression. I name the two thus together, because they are but two names for the same evil tendency within us, only acting in opposite directions. Discontented, covetous tempers, I say, as naturally exercise themselves in brooding over past, or imaginary, or distant, examples of successful rebellion, or triumphant

violence, as debauched and sensual hearts do in those which most naturally occur to them.

There is, indeed, a closer analogy between these two vices, than many, at first sight, would be apt to imagine: and Scripture accordingly names them together, as equally descriptive of those degenerate Christians, who might be expected to arise in the latter days. They who “defile the flesh,” we are told, will also be the readiest to “despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.” “These speak evil of those things which they know not:”—calumniate, where they are incompetent to judge:—“but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.” “These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words of vanity.” They “walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government.” “While they promise” their disciples “liberty,” “they themselves are slaves of corruption.”

Nor is this connection hard to account for. It is the same love of excitement, and impatience of pure and quiet satisfactions; venting itself, ordinarily, in wild and wanton pleasures; and flaming out, when opportunity is given, in lawless defamation, and rude resistance. These are the visible and actual results, where men have audacity and ability to compass them: but who shall estimate the silent corruption, which they daily and hourly

foster in themselves, dreaming of and enjoying the mischief, which they want the heart or the power to realize ?

It is possible, therefore, in every department of wickedness, to make one's self partaker in other men's sins, however long ago committed. And in these two ways of sensuality and rebellion, it is even certain, that without overt acts, an infinite load of such guilt is daily incurred by inconsiderate or self-deceiving Christians. Consequently, there is nothing so very absurd, as some men appear to imagine, in deprecating, annually, all participation in a public sin of former days. According to the pattern set us in the Litany, we have cause to humble ourselves for the "iniquities of our forefathers," else they will surely become our own.

But if ever the descendants of a guilty generation stood in need of continual warning, not to "find pleasure" in their fathers' sins, and so become, like them, "worthy of death:" surely it is so with us of this country, in regard of that series of crimes, of which this day saw the consummation. Whether we consider the general tendency of human opinions on such subjects, or the habitual leaning of the people of England in particular, the experience of every year must shew, I think, to an impartial eye, more clearly than that of the last, how apt men are to have pleasure in those, whom the law of God would charge with rebellion.

To say, that mankind in general are disposed to think slightly of this sin, and to encourage it, at least, by seeming pleased with it, is merely saying, that we sympathise most readily with the faults which are prompted by our own situation in life, the temptation to which, therefore, we are able most thoroughly to estimate. By the constitution of society, nay, even by the law of domestic life, by far the greater part of mankind stand in an inferior relation to others. Children and subjects are by many more numerous, than magistrates and parents are, and have therefore always a greater number to stand by them, and keep them in countenance. The result is well known to every one, who has ever been called to direct others, as magistrate, teacher, master, or parent. It is what almost all must confess, who will survey their own past demeanour, as children, servants, pupils, or subjects, with any thing like an impartial view.

It is the last thing men are ready to own as a fault, their simply refusing to submit and obey. That they have gone too far, in such and such expressions of their contumacy, they are not seldom willing to acknowledge; but they will scarce ever cordially allow, that they were wrong to be contumacious at all. And what greatly encourages this evil spirit is, that here, as in the matter of sensual indulgence, men commonly, as far as they dare, take the part of their guilty

neighbours; from a secret consciousness, it is to be feared, that themselves are, or soon may be, more or less partakers in their guilt.

Further: in spite of habitual recklessness, our moral nature, generally speaking, will have its way so far, that some pretence of good will be acceptable, even to the most profligate of men, to justify the pleasure he takes in the wicked: and it is obvious to remark, that insubordination, in this respect, has greatly the advantage of sensual vices. For as no human administration can be perfect, there never shall be wanting some colour of oppression, towards which it will be easy, if we choose, to turn our minds so exclusively, that all our presumption and self-will shall pass off, in our own account, for a generous hatred of wrong, and concern for the weaker party. When the question really lies between *submission* and resistance, we have an artful way of putting it to ourselves, as if it lay between resistance and *oppression*: as if the merely not interfering, where one has the power to do so, made a man partaker in the wrong. Of course, there are some such cases; but it may be questioned, perhaps, not unreasonably, whether they do not occur oftener on the side of authority than against it: and at any rate, what is called "the heroic temper," the love of excitement, credit, and consequence, is sufficiently awake in human nature, to allow enough for those instances, without any special care of the moralist. On this

head, as in the regulation of the bodily appetites, the theorist may conceive an excess of apathy, but the stress of warning surely must be laid almost or altogether, on the side opposed to indulgence.

These observations are remarkably confirmed by the total silence of Holy Scripture, as to any exceptions from the general rule of not actively resisting civil authorities: a silence so obvious and emphatical, as to be confessed even by those moralists, who are disposed to make the greatest allowance for our natural impatience of control; and carrying with it, by their own statement, this very important conclusion, that obedience to rulers and magistrates is, in His judgment Who cannot err, as sacred a duty as filial obedience, and admits only of the same kind of exceptions. According to which, no calculations of expediency, no amount of public or private good, would justify a subject in violently resisting authority, except in such an extreme case, as would justify a child under pupillage in violently resisting a father or mother. The duty cannot be well stated lower, on the principles of Paley himself^a.

^a Moral Philosophy, b. vi. §. 4. "[The Scriptures] enforce the obligation [to civil obedience] by the proper sanctions of Christianity, without intending either to enlarge or contract, without considering, indeed, the limits by which it is bounden. This is also the method in which the same Apostles enjoin the duty of servants to their masters, *of children to their parents*, of wives to their husbands," &c.

But however that may be, the studious omission, throughout the Bible, of any word of encouragement to resistance, is surely a circumstance of more meaning, than we seem, in general, willing to allow. It is, as every one knows, the fashion, to dismiss this consideration at once, with some such remark as the following: That it was no part of our Saviour's mission, to interfere at all in our political conduct:—a very unadvised assertion, surely, unless it can be proved that political conduct involves no moral responsibility. But those who believe that the sanctions and principles of the Gospel were meant to guide us as members of civil society, no less than in the other relations of life,—I do not see how they should so lightly forget, that the whole weight of express Gospel precept is thrown unreservedly into the scale of submission. The exceptions, be they rare or frequent, are not however thought needful to be mentioned: and whoever dwells much upon them, either in popular instruction, or in his own views of social duty, is so far at variance with Scripture.

Here, again, it is usual to say, that the first Christian converts had wilder notions of liberty, and were more disposed to be turbulent, than mankind in general are; that passages, therefore, intended for their guidance, required to be very strictly worded, but may be received now with large allowances. It is usual, I say, to affirm this: but for the shadow of any thing like proof of

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it, we may search far and wide in vain. If there be one fact in Ecclesiastical History more thoroughly proved than the rest, it is the patient loyalty of the early Christians, under every kind of persecution and injustice, and latterly, in spite of great temptations, from the consciousness of their own number and influence. Is it possible for an unbiassed reader to suppose, that it was fear of their peculiar turbulence, which led the holy writers to speak as they have spoken of the duty of submission? Was it not rather their deep sense of that inward dislike of authority, which they knew to be rooted in all mankind? Let us hear the words of one, who was certainly very much on his guard against overstating the rule of non-resistance. "The Scripture," says Bishop Butler, "throughout the whole of it, commands submission; supposing men apt enough, of themselves, to make the exceptions, and not to need being continually reminded of them^b."

Such is the tone of God's holy word: how ill it harmonizes with the ordinary tone of Christians, speaking or writing on political subjects, all know, who have ears to hear. The lowest statement of the Christian doctrine is that which makes submission the rule, resistance the rare and dangerous exception: would it be speaking too strongly if one said, that the prevalent feeling of Christians is, to sympathize, at once, with such as resist, but

^b Vol. i. p. 352. in his Sermon for Jan. 30.

to require unusual energy or talent, before they can be interested for the supporters of authority?

St. Paul has ranked even personal liberty, liberty opposed to the condition of a slave, among other temporal blessings, as an object, comparatively speaking, below the serious concern of a redeemed immortal being. "Art thou called being a slave? care not for it: but even if thou mayest be made free, put up with it rather^c." That is, "make the best of your condition as it is, rather than grasp, with eager anxiety, at every chance of emancipation." And what he says of personal liberty, is true, I suppose, *à fortiori*, of civil liberty as opposed to subjection. "Care not for it," says the inspired Voice: "let it be your tendency, in this as in all things, rather to improve existing opportunities, than to be always craving after a change of condition."

But what says the Christian world to this? Do not men, somehow, think of liberty, as of something unlike other outward blessings, such as health, riches, domestic comfort? something, the mere pursuing of which, for its own sake, is a part of virtue? Contented slavery in either kind, are they not apt to pronounce it meanness^d?

^c 'Αλλ' εἰ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, μᾶλλον χρήσαι. See St. Chrysostom *in loco*.

^d "All other sorrows virtue may endure,
And find submission more than half a cure.....
But Slavery—Virtue dreads it as her grave,
Patience itself is meanness in a slave." COWPER.

All this being calmly considered, and compared with what our Lord and His Apostles have said; or rather, with what they have left unsaid, (for there is a silence more significant than words;) I think one must own, that civil liberty, high as it may stand among earthly blessings, is usually allowed to fill a space in our thoughts, out of all proportion to that which it fills in the plan of happiness drawn out in the Bible. Though men commit things worthy of death, yet if they be done for freedom's sake, the world finds pleasure in them that do them.

Divesting ourselves, therefore, as far as we may, of all national and party-feeling, the common tendency of mankind, I think, would seem, alone, sufficient to justify the institution and continuance of this day's warning.

But if such be the leaning of mankind in general, it will not, I suppose, be pretended, that we of this country are exempt from it: we who pride ourselves in our love of independence, our quick sense of encroachment and oppression: we who can endure the daily diffusion of calumny and falsehood, of irreverence and insubordination; and not only endure them, but pay their way; under the plea that liberty might suffer, if the popular channels of information were restrained. Of such a people it cannot be said, that the annual commemoration of a great public sin, into which they were hurried in a great measure by

their extravagant love of liberty, is as yet become superfluous and unmeaning. On this point one might confidently appeal from the judgment of minds hackneyed in politics, to the pure and unbiassed feeling of those, who read history for the first time; that is, supposing them accustomed also to the reverent and thoughtful use of the Bible.

For what are the undisputed recollections of the day? A Christian King, as pure and devout in his daily life as any character that adorns history, is brought to trial by his own subjects, for refusing to sacrifice his persecuted friends, and the Church of his country; is condemned and executed with circumstances of insult, inexcusable though offered to the vilest malefactor. All this is done for liberty's sake: and within a few months the same people, who could not endure his doubtful prerogative, shall be seen crouching at the footstool of his murderer, a notorious usurper and tyrant.

I know there is a way of reading history, and watching the turns of passing events, which would make men indifferent to all this, and teach them to regard it as a matter of course: but can this indeed satisfy any, who soberly recollect the moral government of God? To such it must ever seem quite as natural, that the Church of England should keep this day, as it is, that Christ's universal Church should keep the day of St. Stephen's

martyrdom: God having shewn Himself to the eye of faith, not indeed miraculously, yet as distinctly, in the one for our special good, as in the other for that of all Christians.

Such, I am persuaded, is the first feeling of all good minds on this part of history. But too many, as they grow older, are taught to regard it very differently: a change, which in persons generally well-principled is owing perhaps chiefly to two causes.

The first to be mentioned is, the course of events after the restoration of the King's son. His vices, even more than the errors of his brother, have alienated sincere but inconsiderate judgments from the very name and memory of the race: and thus, reversing the Scripture rule most unfairly, men visit the sins of the children on the parent. But surely, on reflecting and generous minds, the very opposite impression must be made. The dignified purity of the King's conduct must shine brighter in their eyes, by contrast with what they are forced to believe regarding his successor's heartless dissipation: and the more dangerous and seducing they esteem the religious errors of James the Second, the more cause they see to bless God for his father's loyalty to the Church of England. The solemn protest against sins of rebellion, which this service brings with it, is so much the more welcome to them, as it comes

accompanied with an act of justice to one, too often unfairly condemned by mere association with names less pure than his own.

The same might be said of the other circumstance just alluded to, as lessening men's interest in King Charles the First, and their horror of the Great Rebellion: I mean, the mixture of religious prejudice, and especially the interference of received opinions on the point of unlimited toleration. Men look on the King as the chosen champion of doctrines to which themselves are averse, and allow their party-spirit to make them at least indifferent to his wrongs, and impatient of the solemn remembrance of him, if they do not actually take pleasure in his murderers. But this only makes it the more desirable that the memorial should be retained, as a caution for ever against the indulgence of party-spirit, and doing evil that good may come: the force of which godless principles is demonstrated by the indifference of posterity to such crimes, quite as unequivocally, though not so fatally, as by the aid or connivance they received at the time. Opinions, be they true or false in the abstract, must be immoral or immorally applied, to have such an effect on the popular sense of right and wrong. Upon this ground, those even, who differ in faith or politics from the King, might well bear with the service of this day: and such among them as are considerate

and truly liberal, do, I believe, bear with it, and approve it.

Connected in some degree with this latter prejudice is one arising from his personal character; by nature reserved, serious and retiring, and loving his own contemplations better than the applause of the world. This was not the kind of demeanour to attract the popular sympathy then, nor to fascinate, in after-times, the ordinary readers of history. And when his severe trials came, unimpeached as he was for personal fortitude, and nobly obstinate in his own good principles, he was found wanting in some qualities, which the world seems agreed to call "heroic," and which have secured the good word of posterity to many, in spite of oppression and tyranny far worse, than any one now dares impute to him. In a qualified sense, one might apply to his political character (there is no irreverence, I trust, in so applying) the prophetic delineation of his Master, the King of Kings. "There is no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." If he had been less pure in his morals and religion, more decided and unscrupulous in his public conduct, he had been likelier then to win his way, and men would now be judging of him more indulgently. There is nothing at all to wonder at in this: nor to lament either, as far as he is concerned. If in

his reputation he still continue to bear the Cross after his Saviour, and be likely to do so till the end of the world; we know that every thing of this sort will but enhance the reward of the true Martyr, when the day of retribution comes. But it highly concerned the Church of Christ in this realm, in her office of public instruction, to take such a providential opportunity of putting on record, for her children's warning, her own estimate of true greatness. And it is at each individual's peril, whether he will take that warning, or whether he will yet go on to measure things by the old Pagan notions of heroism: admiring talent more than virtue, and "speaking good of the covetous, whom God abhorreth."

These cautions are the more necessary, on account of a peculiar kind of Fatalism, which is apt to intrude itself, more especially, on our political opinions and conduct: by reason, I suppose, of men's acting together, on such occasions, in large masses: which makes it easier for each person's imagination to transfer his own guilt to others. But whatever be the cause, certain it is, that such a tendency does exist; that many consciences are beguiled by it; and must we not add, that it has of late been visibly and daily gaining ground? For at what time ever among Christians was the doctrine so often heard, that "such and such evils must be complied with, the 'spirit of the times' so requiring?" On every part of literature and con-

duct, but especially in reference to political duties, we hear this observation repeated; it appears, in fact, to be the sum and substance of some men's practical wisdom; but can it win the calm assent of the conscience? does it not, in fact, amount to a surrender, I do not say of Christian principle only, but of every thing like moral independence and dignity? Can such casuists have root in themselves? can they endure even for a while, when the times are evil and corrupt? "It is impossible," they plead, "but offences will come;" and they proceed as if our Saviour had inferred, "It matters not by whom the offence cometh." Let it be enough for the condemnation of such a spirit, that it is the direct contrary of the spirit of martyrdom: and we all know how its promptings are applied to palliate great public crimes.

Thus, in regard of the fatal precedent by which our history was this day stained: we are told over and over again, that the season had come round, in a kind of moral cycle, when there could not but be a revolution: that the King was in some sort fairly punished for not understanding the times better: that it was indeed much to be regretted, but could not be helped, and had better be borne with, in consideration of greater benefits ensuing.

It is something, at all events, to have upon record the deliberate protest of the Church of England against these lessons of base accommodation: something, that those who are yet willing to

take advice from her Prayer-Book, should find there the good old principles, of plain submission and cheerful obedience, applied to a real and near example, and a condition of society like the present. But it is more, to have the verdict of Scripture herself (for such, undoubtedly, may the History of the Passion falling on this day be considered) in favour of those, who have followed their Saviour in making resignation all their glory. Whether wise or unwise in a worldly sense, the doctrine of the Cross is on their side, and can never, surely, be misapplied, when rehearsed to encourage us in imitating them. Again; could any thing tell more significantly against the too fashionable notion of I know not what fatal necessity, suspending, as it were, men's accountable agency, when they yield to the "spirit of the times"—could any thing more unsparingly condemn the measuring political right and wrong by mere present visible expediency—than the parable selected for the Gospel of the day: our Lord's own expressive rebuke to the Jewish rulers, Caiaphas and the rest? They were deceiving themselves, no doubt, more than they did any one else, with the specious plea of public welfare, and the little worth of one man's blood, set against the safety of the whole nation. There was a voice which spoke home to their consciences, when it represented the husbandmen saying, "Come, let us kill the heir, and then the inheritance surely will be ours." And it is our duty to

repeat the warning, as long as we see people doing such things, or "taking pleasure in them that do them."

It is easy enough, no doubt, for any one who is so inclined, to neutralize all that the Church can say, by a dexterous use of party-feeling: easy, to call it a device of the State for upholding a particular set of opinions. But the matter may be brought to a short issue. If attachment to the cause of our injured King, and sympathy with his high-minded patience, were not in entire harmony with the principles inculcated in all other parts of the Prayer-Book: if Sanderson, Hammond, and Taylor, those Restorers of our fallen Church, spoke otherwise on the duty of subjects, than as former generations of true Churchmen had spoken: then we might perhaps have cause to fear, that Feeling had got the better of Reason, in this one portion of our yearly solemnities. But if they "all speak the same thing, and there be no division among them;" and (what is infinitely more) if what they speak be altogether scriptural: if the doctrine of submission and loyal obedience be only one inseparable branch of the universal doctrine of resignation and contentment—an ingredient of that unreserved Faith, without which it is impossible to please God—then let us bless our Preserver, for not leaving us without special witness to a part of our duty, where all experience has proved us so likely to go wrong. Let us trust our civil welfare to the Gospel rule of

non-resistance, as fearlessly as we trust our domestic happiness to the kindred rule of filial obedience. Such conduct, if universal, would be a perfect security to liberty: inasmuch as the same principle which forbids illegal resistance, would equally forbid being agents in illegal oppression. And they who abide by it, be they many or few, have for their warrant the general tenor and express word of Revelation, the example of our Blessed Lord, His Apostles, and His suffering Church. In every case, the burthen of proof lies wholly on those who plead for resistance.

And what if young men—the high-born especially—instead of that degrading ambition of commencing, early, “men of the world,” would consent to shape their own conduct by the noble simplicity and downright goodness of him, whom we this day commemorate? the secret of whose excellence lay, chiefly, in two qualities, by them most imitable: consistent purity of heart and demeanour, and strict constancy in devotional duties, under the guidance of his and our Church? Does any one believe that such a change would leave society at all a loser, in point of true generosity and courtesy, or whatever else makes life engaging?

But if all this must still be unheard—if the instruction of the day be quite drowned, in men’s eager cry for what is called Freedom: at least the service answers the purpose of a solemn appeal from human prejudice, to Him, before Whom king

and subject must ere long appear together. To whose final and unerring decision, not, it is hoped, with presumptuous confidence, nor yet with any uncharitable thought, but in cheerful assurance that resignation and loyalty can "in no wise lose their reward," we desire, now and always, to "commit our cause."

ADVERTISEMENT
TO
THE FIRST EDITION
OF THE
SERMON ON NATIONAL APOSTASY^a.

SINCE the following pages were prepared for the press, the calamity, in anticipation of which they were written, has actually overtaken this portion of the Church of God. The Legislature of England and Ireland, (*the members of which are not even bound to profess belief in the Atonement,*) this body has virtually usurped the commission of those whom our Saviour entrusted with *at least one voice* in making ecclesiastical laws, on matters wholly or partly spiritual^b. The same Legislature has also ratified, to its full extent, this principle;—that the Apostolical Church in this realm is henceforth only to stand, in the eye of the State, as *one sect among many*, depending, for any pre-eminence she may still appear to retain, merely upon the accident of her having a strong party in the country.

It is a moment, surely, full of deep solicitude to all those members of the Church who still believe her authority divine, and the oaths and obligations, by which they are bound to her, undissolved and indissoluble by calculations of human expediency. Their anxiety turns not so much on the consequences, to the State, of what has been done, (*they are but too evident,*) as on the line of conduct which they are bound themselves to pursue. How may

^a Preached in St. Mary's, Oxford, before His Majesty's Judges of Assize, on Sunday, July 14, 1833.

^b In the suppression of certain Irish Sees, *contrary to the suffrage of the Bishops of England and Ireland.*

they continue their communion with the Church *established*, (hitherto the pride and comfort of their lives,) without any taint of those Erastian Principles on which she is now avowedly to be governed? What answer can we make henceforth to the partisans of the Bishop of Rome, when they taunt us with being a mere Parliamentary Church? And how, consistently with our present relations to the State, can even the doctrinal purity and integrity of the MOST SACRED ORDER be preserved?

The attention of all who love the Church is most earnestly solicited to these questions. They are such, it will be observed, as cannot be answered by appealing to precedents in English History, because, at most, such could only shew, that the difficulty might have been raised before. It is believed, that there are hundreds, nay thousands, of Christians, and that soon there will be tens of thousands, unaffectedly anxious to be rightly guided with regard to these and similar points. And they are mooted thus publicly, for the chance of eliciting, from competent judges, a correct and early opinion.

If, under such trying and delicate circumstances, one could venture to be positive about any thing, it would seem safe to say, that in such measure as it may be thought incumbent on the Church, or on Churchmen, to submit to any profane intrusion, it must at least be their sacred duty, to declare, promulgate, and record, their full conviction, that it *is* intrusion; that they yield to it as they might to any other tyranny, but do from their hearts deprecate and abjure it. This seems the least that can be done: unless we would have our children's children say, "There was once here a glorious Church, but it was betrayed into the hands of Libertines for the real or affected love of a little temporary peace and good order."

July 22, 1833.

S E R M O N VI.

NATIONAL APOSTASY.

I SAMUEL xii. 23.

As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.

ON public occasions, such as the present, the minds of Christians naturally revert to that portion of Holy Scripture, which exhibits to us the will of the Sovereign of the world in more immediate relation to the civil and national conduct of mankind. We naturally turn to the Old Testament, when public duties, public errors, and public dangers, are in question. And what in such cases is natural and obvious, is sure to be more or less right and reasonable. Unquestionably it is a mistaken theology, which would debar Christian nations and statesmen from the instruction afforded by the Jewish Scriptures, under a notion, that the circumstances of that people were altogether peculiar and unique, and therefore irrelevant to every other case. True, there is hazard of misapplication, as there is whenever men teach by example. There is peculiar hazard, from the sacredness and delicacy

of the subject; since dealing with things supernatural and miraculous as if they were ordinary human precedents, would be not only unwise, but profane. But these hazards are more than counterbalanced by the absolute certainty, peculiar to this history, that what is there commended was right, and what is there blamed, wrong. And they would be effectually obviated, if men would be careful to keep in view this caution:—suggested every where, if I mistake not, by the manner in which the Old Testament is quoted in the New:—that, as regards reward and punishment, God dealt formerly with the Jewish people in a manner analogous to that in which He deals now, not so much with Christian nations, as with the souls of individual Christians.

Let us only make due allowances for this cardinal point of difference, and we need not surely hesitate to avail ourselves, as the time may require, of those national warnings, which fill the records of the elder Church: the less so, as the discrepancy lies rather in what is revealed of God's providence, than in what is required in the way of human duty. Rewards and punishments may be dispensed, visibly at least, with a less even hand; but what tempers, and what conduct, God will ultimately reward and punish,—this is a point which cannot be changed: for it depends not on our circumstances, but on His essential, unvarying Attributes.

I have ventured on these few general observations, because the impatience with which the world endures any remonstrance on religious grounds, is apt to shew itself most daringly, when the Law and the Prophets are appealed to. Without any scruple or ceremony, men give us to understand that they regard the whole as obsolete: thus taking the very opposite ground to that which was preferred by the same class of persons two hundred years ago; but, it may be feared, with much the same purpose and result. Then, the Old Testament was quoted at random for every excess of fanatical pride and cruelty: now, its authority goes for nothing, however clear and striking the analogies may be, which appear to warrant us in referring to it. The two extremes, as usual, meet; and in this very remarkable point: that they both avail themselves of the supernatural parts of the Jewish revelation to turn away attention from that, which they, of course, most dread and dislike in it: its authoritative confirmation of the plain dictates of conscience in matters of civil wisdom and duty.

That portion, in particular, of the history of the chosen people, which drew from Samuel, the truest of patriots, the wise and noble sentiment in the text, must ever be an unpleasing and perplexing page of Scripture, to those, who would fain persuade themselves, that a nation, even a Christian nation, may do well enough, as such, without God,

and without His Church. For what if the Jews were bound to the Almighty by ties common to no other people? What if He had condescended to know them in a way in which He was as yet unrevealed to all families of the earth besides? What if, as their relation to Him was nearer, and their ingratitude more surpassing, so they might expect more exemplary punishment? Still, after all has been said, to exaggerate their guilt, in degree, beyond what is supposed possible in any nation whatever now, what can it come to, in kind and in substance, but only this;—that they rejected God? that they wished themselves rid of the moral restraint implied in His peculiar presence and covenant? They said, what the prophet Ezekiel, long after, represents their worthy posterity as saying, “We will be as the heathen, the families of the countries.” Once for all, we will get rid of these disagreeable, unfashionable scruples, which throw us behind, as we think, in the race of worldly honour and profit.” Is this indeed a tone of thought, which Christian nations cannot fall into? Or, if they should, has it ceased to be displeasing to God? In other words, has He forgotten to be angry with impiety and practical atheism? Either this must be affirmed, or men must own, (what is clear at once to plain unsophisticated readers,) that this first overt act, which began the downfall of the Jewish nation, stands on record, with its fatal con-

sequences, for a perpetual warning to all nations, as well as to all individual Christians, who, having accepted God for their King, allow themselves to be weary of subjection to Him, and think they should be happier if they were freer, and more like the rest of the world.

I do not enter into the question, whether visible temporal judgments are to be looked for by Christian nations, transgressing as those Jews did. Surely common sense and piety unite, in representing this inquiry as, practically, one of no great importance. When it is once known for certain that such and such conduct is displeasing to the King of kings, surely common sense and piety concur in setting their mark of reprobation on such conduct, whether the punishment, sure to overtake it, come to-morrow, or a year hence, or wait till we are in another world.

Waving this question, therefore, I proceed to others, which appear to me, I own, at the present moment especially, of the very gravest practical import.

What are the symptoms, by which one may judge most fairly, whether or no a nation, as such, is becoming alienated from God and Christ?

And what are the particular duties of sincere Christians, whose lot is cast by Divine Providence in a time of such dire calamity?

The conduct of the Jews, in asking for a king, may furnish an ample illustration of the first point:

the behaviour of Samuel, then and afterwards, supplies as perfect a pattern of the second, as can well be expected from human nature.

I. The case is at least possible, of a nation, having for centuries acknowledged, as an essential part of its theory of government, that, as a Christian nation, she is also a part of Christ's Church, and bound, in all her legislation and policy, by the fundamental rules of that Church—the case is, I say, conceivable, of a government and people, so constituted, deliberately throwing off the restraint, which in many respects such a principle would impose on them, nay, disavowing the principle itself; and that, on the plea, that other states, as flourishing or more so in regard of wealth and dominion, do well enough without it. Is not this desiring, like the Jews, to have an earthly king over them, when the Lord their God is their King? Is it not saying in other words, "We will be as the heathen, the families of the countries," the aliens to the Church of our Redeemer?

To such a change, whenever it takes place, the immediate impulse will probably be given by some pretence of danger from without,—such as, at the time now spoken of, was furnished to the Israelites by an incursion of the children of Ammon; or by some wrong or grievance in the executive government, such as the malversation of Samuel's sons, to whom he had deputed his judicial functions. Pretences will never be hard to find; but, in

reality, the movement will always be traceable to the same decay or want of faith, the same deficiency in Christian resignation and thankfulness, which leads so many, as individuals, to disdain and forfeit the blessings of the Gospel. Men not impressed with religious principle attribute their ill success in life,—the hard times they have to struggle with,—to any thing rather than their own ill-desert: and the institutions of the country, ecclesiastical and civil, are always at hand to bear the blame of whatever seems to be going amiss. Thus, the discontent in Samuel's time, which led the Israelites to demand a change of constitution, was discerned by the Unerring Eye, though perhaps little suspected by themselves, to be no better than a fresh development of the same restless, godless spirit, which had led them so often into idolatry. "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works, which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken Me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee^d."

The charge might perhaps surprise many of them, just as, in other times and countries, the impatient patrons of innovation are surprised, at finding themselves rebuked on religious grounds. Perhaps the Jews pleaded the express counte-

^d 1 Sam. viii. 7, 8.

nance, which the words of their Law, in one place^e, seemed, by anticipation, to lend to the measure they were urging. And so, in modern times, when liberties are to be taken, and the intrusive passions of men to be indulged, precedent and permission, or what sounds like them, may be easily found and quoted for every thing. But Samuel, in God's name, silenced all this, giving them to understand, that in His sight the whole was a question of motive and purpose, not of ostensible and colourable argument ;—in His sight, I say, to Whom we, as well as they, are nationally responsible for much more than the soundness of our deductions as matter of disputation, or of law ; we are responsible for the meaning and temper in which we deal with His Holy Church, established among us for the salvation of our souls.

These, which have been hitherto mentioned as omens and tokens of an Apostate Mind in a nation, have been suggested by the portion itself of sacred history, to which I have ventured to direct your attention. There are one or two more, which the nature of the subject, and the palpable tendency of things around us, will not allow to be passed over.

One of the most alarming, as a symptom, is the growing indifference, in which men indulge themselves, to other men's religious sentiments. Under the guise of charity and toleration we are come

^e Deut. xvii. 14—20.

almost to this pass; that no difference, in matters of faith, is to disqualify for our approbation and confidence, whether in public or domestic life. Can we conceal it from ourselves, that every year the practice is becoming more common, of trusting men unreservedly in the most delicate and important matters, without one serious inquiry, whether they do not hold principles which make it impossible for them to be loyal to their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier? Are not offices conferred, partnerships formed, intimacies courted,—nay, (what is almost too painful to think of,) do not parents commit their children to be educated, do they not encourage them to intermarry, in houses, on which Apostolical Authority would rather teach them to set a mark, as unfit to be entered by a faithful servant of Christ?

I do not now speak of public measures only or chiefly; many things of that kind may be thought, whether wisely or no, to become from time to time necessary, which are in reality as little desired by those who lend them a seeming concurrence, as they are, in themselves, undesirable. But I speak of the spirit which leads men to exult in every step of that kind; to congratulate one another on the supposed decay of what they call an exclusive system.

Very different are the feelings with which it seems natural for a true Churchman to regard

such a state of things, from those which would arise in his mind on witnessing the mere triumph of any given set of adverse opinions, exaggerated or even heretical as he might deem them. He might feel as melancholy,—he could hardly feel so indignant.

But this is not a becoming place, nor are these safe topics, for the indulgence of mere feeling. The point really to be considered is, whether, according to the coolest estimate, the fashionable liberality of this generation be not ascribable, in a great measure, to the same temper which led the Jews voluntarily to set about degrading themselves to a level with the idolatrous Gentiles? And, if it be true any where, that such enactments are forced on the Legislature by public opinion, is APOSTASY too hard a word to describe the temper of that nation?

The same tendency is still more apparent, because the fair gloss of candour and forbearance is wanting, in the surly or scornful impatience often exhibited, by persons who would regret passing for unbelievers, when Christian motives are suggested, and checks from Christian principles attempted to be enforced on their public conduct. I say, “their public conduct,” more especially; because in that, I know not how, persons are apt to be more shameless, and readier to avow the irreligion that is in them;—amongst other reasons, probably,

from each feeling that he is one of a multitude, and fancying, therefore, that his responsibility is divided.

For example :—whatever be the cause, in this country of late years, (though we are lavish in professions of piety,) there has been observable a growing disinclination, on the part of those bound by VOLUNTARY OATHS, to whatever reminds them of their obligation; a growing disposition to explain it all away. We know what, some years ago, would have been thought of such uneasiness, if betrayed by persons officially sworn, in private, legal, or commercial life. If there be any subjects or occasions, now, on which men are inclined to judge of it more lightly, it concerns them deeply to be quite sure, that they are not indulging or encouraging a profane dislike of God's awful Presence; a general tendency, as a people, to leave Him out of all their thoughts.

They will have the more reason to suspect themselves, in proportion as they see and feel more of that impatience under pastoral authority, which our Saviour Himself has taught us to consider as a never-failing symptom of an unchristian temper. "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me^f." Those words of divine truth put beyond all sophistical exception, what common sense would lead us to infer, and what daily experience teaches;—that disrespect to

^f Luke x. 16.

the Successors of the Apostles, as such, is an unquestionable symptom of enmity to Him, Who gave them their commission at first, and has pledged Himself to be with them for ever. Suppose such disrespect general and national, suppose it also avowedly grounded not on any fancied tenet of religion, but on mere human reasons of popularity and expediency, either there is no meaning at all in these emphatic declarations of our Lord, or that nation, how highly soever she may think of her own religion and morality, stands convicted in His sight of a direct disavowal of His Sovereignty.

To this purpose it may be worth noticing, that the ill-fated chief, whom God gave to the Jews, as the prophet tells us, in His anger^g, and whose disobedience and misery were referred by himself to his “fearing the people, and obeying their voice^h,” whose conduct, therefore, may be fairly taken as a sample of what public opinion was at that time supposed to require,—his first step in apostasy was, perhaps, an intrusion on the sacrificial officeⁱ, certainly an impatient breach of his engagement with Samuel, as the last and greatest of his crimes was persecuting David, whom he well knew to bear God’s special commission. God forbid, that any Christian land should ever, by her prevailing temper and policy, revive the memory and likeness of Saul, or incur a sentence of reprobation like his. But if such a thing should be, the crimes of

^g Hos. xiii. 11. ^h 1 Sam. xv. 24. ⁱ 1 Sam. xiii. 8—14.

that nation will probably begin in infringement on Apostolical Rights; she will end in persecuting the true Church; and in the several stages of her melancholy career, she will continually be led on from bad to worse by vain endeavours at accommodation and compromise with evil. Sometimes toleration may be the word, as with Saul when he spared the Amalekites; sometimes state security, as when he sought the life of David; sometimes sympathy with popular feeling, as appears to have been the case, when violating solemn treaties, he attempted to exterminate the remnant of the Gibeonites, in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah^k. Such are the sad but obvious results of separating religious resignation altogether from men's notions of civil duty.

II. But here arises the other question, on which it was proposed to say a few words; and with a view to which, indeed, the whole subject must be considered, if it is to lead to any practical improvement. What should be the tenor of their conduct, who find themselves cast on such times of decay and danger? How may a man best reconcile his allegiance to God and his Church with his duty to his country, that country, which now, by the supposition, is fast becoming hostile to the Church, and cannot therefore long be the friend of God?

Now in proportion as any one sees reason to fear that such is, or soon may be, the case in his

^k 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

own land, just so far may he see reason to be thankful, especially if he be called to any national trust, for such a complete pattern of his duty, as he may find in the conduct of Samuel. That combination of sweetness with firmness, of consideration with energy, which constitutes the temper of a perfect public man, was never perhaps so beautifully exemplified. He makes no secret of the bitter grief and dismay, with which the resolution of his countrymen has filled him. He was prepared to resist it at all hazards, had he not received from God Himself directions to give them their own way; protesting, however, in the most distinct and solemn tone, so as to throw the whole blame of what might ensue on their wilfulness. Having so protested, and found them obstinate, he does not therefore at once forsake their service, he continues discharging all the functions they had left him, with a true and loyal, though most heavy, heart. "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way."

Should it ever happen (which God avert, but we cannot shut our eyes to the danger) that the Apostolical Church should be forsaken, degraded, nay trampled on and despoiled by the State and people of England, I cannot conceive a kinder wish for her, on the part of her most affectionate and dutiful children, than that she may, consistently, act in the spirit of this most noble sentence; nor

a course of conduct more likely to be blessed by a restoration to more than her former efficiency. In speaking of the Church, I mean, of course, the laity, as well as the clergy in their three orders,—the whole body of Christians united, according to the will of Jesus Christ, under the Successors of the Apostles. It may, by God's blessing, be of some use, to shew how, in the case supposed, the example of Samuel might guide her collectively, and each of her children individually, down even to minute details of duty.

The Church would, first of all, have to be constant, as before, in INTERCESSION. No despiteful usage, no persecution, could warrant her in ceasing to pray, as did her first fathers and patterns, for the State; and all who are in authority. That duty once well and cordially performed, all other duties, so to speak, are secured. Candour, respectfulness, guarded language,—all that the Apostle meant, in warning men not to “speak evil of dignities,” may then, and then only, be practised, without compromise of truth and fortitude, when the habit is attained of praying as we ought for the very enemies of our precious and holy cause.

The constant sense of God's presence and consequent certainty of final success, which can be kept up no other way, would also prove an effectual bar against the more silent but hardly less malevolent feeling, of disgust, almost amounting to misanthropy, which is apt to lay hold on sensitive

minds, when they see oppression and wrong triumphant on a large scale. The custom of interceding, even for the wicked, will keep the Psalmist's reasoning habitually present to their thoughts: "Fret not thyself because of the ungodly, neither be thou envious against the evil doers: for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and be withered even as the green herb. . . Leave off from wrath, and let go displeasure: fret not thyself, else shalt thou be moved to do evil¹."

Thus not only by supernatural aid, which we have warrant of God's word for expecting, but even in the way of natural consequence, the first duty of the Church and of Churchmen, INTERCESSION, sincerely practised, would prepare them for the second;—which, following the words of Samuel as our clue, we may confidently pronounce to be REMONSTRANCE. "I will teach you the good and the right way." REMONSTRANCE, calm, distinct, and persevering, in public and in private, direct and indirect, by word, look, and demeanour, is the unequivocal duty of every Christian, according to his opportunities, when the Church landmarks are being broken down.

Among laymen, a deep responsibility would appear to rest on those particularly, whose profession leads them most directly to consider the boundaries of the various rights and duties, which fill the space of civilized Society. The immediate

¹ Psalm xxxvii. 1, 2, 8.

machinery of change must always pass through their hands: and they have also very great power in forming and modifying public opinion. The very solemnity of this day may remind them, even more than others, of the close amity which must ever subsist between equal justice and pure religion; Apostolical religion, more especially, in proportion to her superior truth and exactness. It is an amity, made still more sacred, if possible, in the case of the Church and Law of England, by historical recollections, associations and precedents; of the most engaging and ennobling cast.

But I return to the practical admonition afforded her, in critical periods, by Samuel's example.

After the accomplishment of the change which he deprecated, his whole behaviour, to Saul especially, is a sort of expansion of the sentiment in the text. It is all earnest INTERCESSION with God, grave, respectful, affectionate REMONSTRANCE with the misguided man himself. Saul is boldly rebuked, and that publicly, for his impious liberality in sparing the Amalekites, yet so as not to dishonour him in the presence of the people. Even when it became necessary for God's prophet to shew that he was in earnest, and give the most effectual of warnings, by separating himself from so unworthy a person,—when “Samuel came no more to see Saul^m,”—even then, we are told, he still “mourned for him.”

On the same principle, come what may, we have

^m 1 Sam. xv. 35.

ill learned the lessons of our Church, if we permit our patriotism to decay, together with the protecting care of the State. "The powers that be are ordained of God," whether they foster the true Church or no. Submission and order are still duties. They were so in the days of pagan persecution; and the more of loyal and affectionate feeling we endeavour to mingle with our obedience, the better.

After all, the surest way to uphold or restore our endangered Church, will be for each of her anxious children, in his own place and station, to resign himself more thoroughly to his God and Saviour in those duties, public and private, which are not immediately affected by the emergencies of the moment: the daily and hourly duties, I mean, of piety, purity, charity, justice. It will be a consolation understood by every thoughtful Churchman, that let his occupation be, apparently, never so remote from such great interests, it is in his power, by doing all as a Christian, to credit and advance the cause he has most at heart; and what is more, to draw down God's blessing upon it. This ought to be felt, for example, as one motive more to exact punctuality in those duties, personal and official, which the return of an Assize week offers to our practice; one reason more for veracity in witnesses, fairness in pleaders, strict impartiality, self-command, and patience, in those on whom decisions depend; and for an awful

sense of God's presence in all. An Apostle once did not disdain to urge good conduct upon his proselytes of lowest condition, upon the ground, that, so doing, they would adorn and recommend the doctrine of God our Saviourⁿ. Surely, then, it will be no unworthy principle, if any man be more circumspect in his behaviour, more watchful and fearful of himself, more earnest in his petitions for spiritual aid, from a dread of disparaging the holy name of the English Church, in her hour of peril, by his own personal fault or negligence.

As to those who, either by station or temper, feel themselves most deeply interested, they cannot be too careful in reminding themselves, that one chief danger, in times of change and excitement, arises from their tendency to engross the whole mind. Public concerns, ecclesiastical or civil, will prove indeed ruinous to those, who permit them to occupy all their care and thoughts, neglecting or undervaluing ordinary duties, more especially those of a devotional kind.

These cautions being duly observed, I do not see how any person can devote himself too entirely to the cause of the Apostolical Church in these realms. There may be, as far as he knows, but a very few to sympathise with him. He may have to wait long, and very likely pass out of this world before he see any abatement in the triumph of disorder and irreligion. But, if he be consistent,

ⁿ Titus ii. 10.

he possesses, to the utmost, the personal consolations of a good Christian : and as a true Churchman, he has that encouragement, which no other cause in the world can impart in the same degree :— he is calmly, soberly, demonstrably, SURE, that, sooner or later, HIS WILL BE THE WINNING SIDE, and that the victory will be complete, universal, eternal.

He need not fear to look upon the efforts of Antichristian powers, as did the Holy Apostles themselves, who welcomed the first persecution in the words of the Psalmist :

“ Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing ?

“ The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed.

“ For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

“ FOR TO DO WHATSOEVER THY HAND AND THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE °.”

° Acts iv. 25—28.

SERMON VII.^a

CHURCH AND STATE.

ISAIAH xlix. 23.

*And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens
thy nursing mothers.*

THESE words, few and simple as they are, contain in them the force of an entire parable, similar in some respects to those affecting domestic pictures, by which our Divine Master Himself delighted to teach men sacred and saving truth. And perhaps one may observe by the way, that this is a notion which may be applied with some advantage to many portions of the Old Testament, the prophetic books more especially. What men, in a light and superficial way, are accustomed to pass over as mere ornaments of oriental poetry, may be found on a closer inspection to contain whole treasures of divine morality, applying immediately to the conduct of life.

There is indeed no occasion, respecting these

^a Preached before the University on the 26th of June, 1835: the anniversary of William the Fourth's Accession.

words of Isaiah in particular, to prove that we are not over-straining figurative language, if we apply them to cases now existing, and to the circumstances of the Christian Church. For by common consent of Christians they are so applied. All, I suppose, or nearly all, who receive the holy Scriptures, are agreed in explaining this famous hymn of Isaiah—whether it be called prophecy, or precept, or a mixture of both, all agree to interpret it—of the case of the Christian Church since the time of Constantine. Even those, who imagine it for the most part yet unfulfilled, looking forward as they do to an æra of millennial happiness, yet mix up that happiness so far with certain circumstances of civil government, as to believe, partly on the strength of this particular verse, that the kings and rulers of this world are to be prime agents in the glorious change they look for. And it is notorious, that no one passage of holy Scripture is more continually in the mouths of those, who, for some years past in this country, have been engaged in vindicating the established order of things, against the combined efforts of what I will venture to call antichristian powers of sundry and manifold denominations. Whenever the alliance of Church and State has been attacked, they have met the assailants with the plea, that Scripture itself expressly points out the kings of this world as the ordinary nursing fathers of the Church, and their queens as her nursing mothers. And doubt-

less they have had great reason in so arguing: but it may be questioned, whether the words have always been taken in the exact meaning which the holy Prophet intended: and what is a much more serious consideration, it may be questioned whether the misinterpretation of them be not one among many encouragements to prevailing errors, which are daily doing more and more mischief both to governments and people, and to the whole Church of God.

For is not the common interpretation of these words nearly or exactly such as the following: viz. that the Church, of herself feeble and helpless, and so far like an infant, is committed by Divine Providence to the care of the State, as any child might be to the care of its nurse: consequently, that it depends mainly on State support, and could not well exist, at least could not in any sense flourish, were that support withdrawn, any more than an infant could go on and prosper without the attending care of nurses? From which inevitably a tendency follows, to sacrifice more, much more, of ecclesiastical rights to political expediency, than would be sacrificed, if the Church were deemed independent.

Now whether such a tendency, considering all things, be right or wrong, wise or unwise—whether the Church, however naturally, in all Christian lands, allied to the State, were meant to remain independent or no—this is not our present question;

but simply, whether the analogy adopted by Isaiah will justify the conclusion which has been so frequently deduced from it : whether we are here really taught by the voice of Inspiration to consider the pillar and ground of the truth as an edifice based in any measure on the will of man, however enlightened, and however sincere.

It may perhaps appear, on a nearer consideration of the passage, that the meaning is altogether different : that instead of representing the Church as dependent on the State, the holy Prophet intended to point out the entire submission which the State owes to the Church : that is, in other words, the entire submission which God's ministers in temporal things owe to that great enduring plan, which He has set on foot in a lost world for subduing all things to Himself.

For it is plain on consideration of the context, and indeed it is acknowledged by some of the commentators, that when the Church is told, Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, it is not meant that the Church as an infant is lodged in the arms of the civil power, but that as a mother she lodges her children in its arms. The monarchs and princesses of this world are as foster fathers and foster mothers in the family of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of His Spouse, the Holy Church Universal. Let us observe how the image is gradually introduced, and we shall see, I think, that it is impossible to give it any other turn,

First, Zion, or the Church, appears in the prophetic vision, as a widowed and bereaved woman. "Zion saith, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." As if not enduring to hear her complain, the voice of the heavenly Comforter immediately interposes: and the chief topic of consolation is, "the children she should have, after she had lost the other;" or as it stands literally, the "children of her bereavement." "Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro: and *who hath brought up these?* Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been? Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and *they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.* And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers."

Is it not plain, that the office of the nursing parents in the last sentence is the very same with that described in the former one? It is, to bring the children of the Church in their arms, and to carry them on their shoulders. The latter image will be more exact and congruous, if we understand it, as the phrase of the original directs, of an infant borne in the usual way, partly on the arms and partly on the bosom: according to the beautiful

picture in the Book of Deuteronomy, in which the Almighty condescends to represent Himself under this very image of a nursing Father, taking charge of Benjamin as His youngest child; not without allusion to the history of the patriarch Jacob. "Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders^b:" that is, shall be carried on his bosom, as a labouring man on a day of rest takes delight in carrying his children. Whoever will compare the two passages, even to the very wording of the original, will see that they mean one and the same thing: the same which Moses also mentioned when he complained, that he had to carry the people in his bosom, "*as a nursing father beneath a sucking child*, to the land which God sware unto their fathers^c." And Moses, it will be observed, was by office a kind of type of the civil power in the Church: so that the image of a nursing father would almost seem appropriated, (*οἰκεῖον*,) to that subject: as that of a bride is to the Church herself.

However, the image in Isaiah, as above explained, is most distinct, and perfectly agreeable to the context. Not so, if the words be understood in what appears to be the more popular way: if the sovereigns of earth be to nurse the Church herself, and not to act as nurses under her. In such a

^b Deut. xxxiii. 12.

^c Numbers xi. 12.

construction there is a violent change of imagery, such as can hardly be paralleled in the prophetic writings. The Church, which one sentence before was an almost orphaned mother, in this sentence would wear the person of a foundling child: an alteration the more unnatural, since in the very next clause she is again a majestic mother of children: "They shall bow down to thee with their faces to the earth, and shall lick the dust of thy feet. . . . I will contend with them that contend with thee, and will save thy children."

Nor can it in reason be objected to this interpretation, that the expression used is, "*thy* nursing fathers and mothers:" since the same way of speaking is used in other places: for example, the persons who educated Ahab's children are called "bringers up" or "nursing fathers" to Ahab^d. For indeed the term, however endearing, was in those early times associated with slavery. Foster parents were slaves, or at least dependents on some large family: it was a name expressive of *service*, as *chamberlain* or *messenger* might be. Accordingly we see with what deference the nursing fathers treat the mystical Mother in the vision: "They bow themselves with their faces to the ground, and lick up the dust of her feet."

There is indeed one following prophecy, which might seem to countenance the ordinary inter-

^d 2 Kings x. 1.

pretation of the place: namely, where in the sixtieth chapter^e it is promised, “Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. *Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and thou shalt suck the breast of kings.*” It is clear however, on examining the place, that “giving suck” and “yielding milk” are here put, not as representing the office of a foster parent, but simply to express that nothing, in the days there spoken of, should be thought by the former persecutors too near and dear to be yielded up to God’s people. The one passage is not parallel to the other, and cannot therefore affect our explanation of it.

The force of the prophetic imagery here being thus in some sort ascertained, it may be well to examine in detail its moral drift and meaning, which the very terms of it shew to be strictly in unison with the services of this important day.

But first, that one may not seem to build too much on the interpretation of a single verse, and that in a highly poetical portion of Scripture, I would just recommend to your consideration, whether the meaning now assigned to that verse be not in substance identical with St. Paul’s meaning in a passage professedly didactic: I mean, where he tells the Roman Christians, that the magistrate, even the heathen magistrate, is “a minister of God to them for

^e Ver. 16.

good," Θεοῦ διακόνος σοι εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν. And again, that their rulers' expenses must be cheerfully paid, because they are burthened in God's name with a public service, λειτουργοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ. The figure indeed adopted by the Apostle differs in some measure from that which the Prophet had employed, the one being taken from a republic, the other from a family; but there is no difference in the practical import of the two. In both, civil governors are reminded that they are far from independent; they are in the one place "ministers of God," in the other, nursing fathers under the mystical Sion: in both is declared the immense importance of their function not only to the general welfare, but also to that of each individual Christian; St. Paul saying, "He is the minister of God *to thee* for good;" Isaiah, "Thy sons and daughters," each of them, "shall be carried and borne in their arms:" in both (to add no more) the duty of submission all but unreserved is most emphatically expressed or implied.

Bearing this agreement of the Prophet and Apostle in mind, let us proceed to apply their common sentiment as a sort of key to some of the doubts and perplexities, which in the present stage of God's providential government have arisen, or may probably arise, from the blending of things sacred and things civil. For (not to speak of those who maintain, profanely and fanatically, that the State, as such, ought not to be of any religion) I suppose that there now are, and have been ever

since there was a Church established in the world, two distinct systems, views, or theories, to one or other of which might be referred all opinions and practices concerning what is called the Alliance of Church and State. The one theory supposes it *one* duty of the civil governor to protect and cherish *some* religion, *as one means among many* for securing peace and order in his dominions: the other, considering that there can be but one Church,—the one great system ordained by our Lord before His Ascension into Heaven, to which all the promises are made,—assigns to civil governors in every land their high λειτουργία, or ministry under that Church, namely, to be nursing fathers to her children, training them up in her principles, and by her ordinances,—bringing them *to* her, and keeping them *with* her. Of these two systems, the two interpretations of this famous verse of Isaiah may be taken respectively as types, samples, or specimens: and perhaps it may be no bad way of getting at their comparative merits, if we compare their respective results, on some of those branches of duty, public and private, which naturally offer themselves to a loyal Christian's contemplation, as often as this good day returns.

To take individual duties first, and to begin with that which is undoubtedly the prominent duty of the day; loyalty, or affectionate reverence to our Sovereign. Surely the difference is not small, whether we consider him as holding a *sacred* office,

as *ordained* in a certain sense to perform certain duties in the Church of God ; or simply as stationed over us by God's providence, without any special commission for the Church's welfare. No doubt, a dutiful mind would honour and obey His Majesty in any case : but in acting on the one opinion there will be an immediate conviction of God's presence, a sense of security in being on His side, a humble hope that we are even working with God in the great scheme of the Church Universal. All this and more will be experienced by those who consistently obey kings as the Church's chief ministers, and cannot well be experienced by those who obey them as merely invested with state authority. GOD'S ANOINTED, ever was and will be a phrase of deep and sacred meaning to such as have the fear of God in their hearts. In the commonest acts of submission to royal authority, they will endeavour to have something of the same devout feeling, with which they serve Him in His Church, or listen, for His sake, to the recommendations of His ministers : a feeling which beyond all others, when duly practised, becomes by the blessing of God its own reward.

Next, observe what an effect would be produced by this same idea of kingly authority, in restraining the tendency men have to *speak evil* of rulers. The voice of inspiration teaches over and over, that this practice, indulged and habitual, is one of the most fearful symptoms of irreverence and practical

atheism : yet it is a sin in which even well-disposed persons are apt to go a good way, out of mere inconsideration, or by way of conforming themselves to the presumptuous liberties of the time. Surely the very thing to check them would be, to recall if possible the old notion, and persuade them, as the truth is, that in wantonly speaking evil of anointed Kings, they are just reviling God through His chosen ministers. In sudden and continually recurring temptations, such as this of evil-speaking, not all the arguments that can be offered regarding the mischief done to society, the ill effect on our own minds, and the like, will ever be half so available as the simple feeling that such and such topics have something holy about them, and require to be treated with a certain self-restraint, such as keeps even thoughtless people silent in a Church.

I may remark in passing, that this reverential treatment of the King's name is the more needful to be enforced, since in a great country like ours, and according to the course of society in ordinary times, it is really almost the only way, besides intercession, public and private, whereby we may exercise and cherish the feeling of loyalty, completely separated as we are from the person of the King. I say, "in ordinary times : " for at present, unhappily, there is but too distinct a call on every Christian here, for the direct exercise of loyalty, in discouraging intrusion on the plain rights of our Sovereign, more

or less openly menaced in so many quarters. But on this painful topic no more shall be added than the simple expression of an earnest wish, that all who are any way engaged in that cause may remember that it is a sacred cause, the cause of God; as being that of him who is in one sense Chief Minister over this part of His Church. Pity that so many should take it up as a mere struggle for just rights, an effort to preserve liberty and property, or any thing else which the world values. It is all that, and much more: and surely we must beware, lest by our unworthy and inadequate notions we forfeit the blessing otherwise sure to attend on it, whether visibly triumphant or no.

But in thus urging loyalty to Christian kings on the ground of their being appointed agents in the Church system, are we not, it may be asked, opening a door to disloyalty, first in the case of unbelieving or heretical governors, and next, if any calling themselves Churchmen take part with the world in oppressing the Church, and trampling on her fundamental principles? Are we not sanctioning what is commonly accounted one of the worst errors of Rome, the notion that there is a visible Church authority above the civil power, entitled in certain cases to dispense with the subjects' obedience?

This may be imagined, but the contrary to all this is the fact. So far from furnishing an incitement to impatience and rebellion, there is no such

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security for quiet and Christian submission even to abused authority, as a sense of that authority proceeding from God, and forming a part of His great everlasting plan: nothing which so reconciles the mind to the thought of enduring it for its time, as the knowing it to be, however perverted, a real trust under Him for His Church. The experience of the three first centuries is surely a sufficient proof of this: a proof not to be invalidated by any contradictions or exceptions which may appear among the conflicts of the subsequent ages. It is not to be doubted that even at that time the kings of the earth had received their commission to be nursing fathers of the Church, although, as yet, they despised and rejected it. Accordingly, they were even then to be owned, and they were constantly owned, as ministers, *λειτουργοὶ*, of the Great King to Christian people for their good. No personal oppression, no religious persecution, could then tempt Christian subjects to mutiny. The high destinies of the royal office being known beforehand, it was held sacred, as for other blessings to which God made it instrumental, so especially for the work's sake which He had decreed it should one day perform. Nor could any unworthiness of the person ever at all desecrate the function, or take away its claim to something like religious reverence.

Thus it was before the rulers of the civilized world had generally agreed to acknowledge them-

selves, in the sense above explained, servants of the Church of God. And thus it will be, we trust, again, should the evil day occur, in which they shall renounce that service, and consent to live, *as rulers*, without God in the world. Then it will be again seen, by His grace, that true religious loyalty is independent of the worthiness of governors; and that while the Church ceases not, in her collective character, and by her ordained instruments, to reprove, rebuke, exhort even highest earthly potentates, as having a true indefeasible authority towards them, yet Churchmen individually will not dare to meet the abuses of legitimate power by any thing but firm remonstrance and patient suffering.

But what will be the result on the loyalty of Christians towards rulers renouncing the Church, supposing the prevalence of that which may be called perhaps without offence the *lower* view of the connection of Church and State? If the office of sovereign has nothing in it particularly sacred, what is to secure the allegiance of Churchmen to it, should it happen at any time or place to be turned against the privileges and interests of the Church? Will not men presently begin to talk of obedience and protection being reciprocal; of an ecclesiastical expediency, paramount to all allegiance; of excusable resistance, forfeiture, and virtual abdication? Whereas no calculations of what may seem momentarily expedient even for the best of causes, no, nor yet "oppression, which

maketh even a wise man mad," will ever move a true consistent Churchman to rebellion, any more than the personal errors of some prelates would lead him to renounce Apostolical authority.

Thus on the simple principle of the civil magistrate being by God's ordinance an agent in the great Church system, and so far a sacred person, it would seem that all the duties of loyalty on the part of individuals are sufficiently provided for: and strengthened moreover by a sanction, such as nothing at all, but that kind of heavenly interposition, could have afforded.

And here perhaps, naturally, our deductions from the Prophet's principle of regal power would close: the duty of governors, to the consideration of which in the next place it would of course lead us, not being a very proper subject for discussion on the part of mere subjects.

But we of this country are, by God's providence, so situated, that more or less of regal and public duties have (if one may say so) devolved on us generally. By the constitution of our country, we are almost all of us, in some slight measure at least, responsible for the acts of that country. Not one so insignificant but he has his share in forming what is called public opinion; not one of us therefore but has reason to apprehend, that he will have his share of account to give hereafter, for any great national sin or neglect of the Church, of which in our time our country may have been guilty.

For this reason, and also with a view to the right direction of our intercessions for our King and country, and moreover because the sentiment of the text more immediately leads the mind in that direction; it may be right in conclusion to take some notice of certain great *public* questions and duties also, which instinctively occur to our thoughts, as being most directly and materially affected by such an intimation of the Divine Will.

First, whereas it is held by some that truth of doctrine only, by others that peaceable and moral tendencies only, are to be looked to by the governors of a country, in determining what religion they will encourage, or whether they will encourage any: it seems, that if we would act on this and on other like passages of the Prophets and Apostles, something beyond either truth or good tendency must enter into our consideration. We must look to the whole system of the Church as it was ordained from the beginning; to its external and visible, as well as to its internal parts, its government and Sacraments, as well as its doctrine and morals. The *whole system* (I mean of course in all important points) is the rule to be established, as nearly as circumstances allow. Otherwise, instead of foster-fathers, entrusted to train the Church's children according to the Church's own principles, we constitute ourselves judges, governors, and directors, for the training and reforming the Church herself. So doing, how acute soever our

calculations, and benevolent our plans for our fellow-men, we cannot with any shew of reason pretend to that highest honour, of being God's fellow-labourers, in building up that holy household, of which Jesus Christ is the Head Corner Stone.

For this reason, though one would speak tenderly of many of those bodies which have thought themselves excused in dispensing with the holy Apostolical Succession in their ministry, yet surely it is most unwise, and I will add most unkind, to speak of those bodies as if they could be sure of a full inheritance of sacramental grace; or as though any state were free by God's word to choose between their form, and that of the Apostles: modes of speaking, which can never be justified by Scripture, and which are clearly against the whole stream and current of Antiquity.

And should that turn out true, which experience seems daily to indicate; that this same slighted succession is the fore-appointed safeguard of the integrity of our Lord's holy Sacraments, and that again of the integrity of His fundamental doctrines; much indeed will they have to answer for, who so disparage it, whether out of a false charity, or merely in a loose unguarded way of discourse. And this is a very practical matter. Conversations requiring the above caution are continually occurring: and opportunities arise oftener than might be wished, of according or denying one's sanction

to laxer systems, by actual religious communion, or refusal to communicate, with their followers.

With regard to another great point on which discussions are continually arising; the view which a Christian commonwealth ought to take of the endowments of the Church: I could almost be content with a fair opponent to try the whole issue by appeal to this single verse; "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." Governments then are put in trust by Almighty God with the office of cherishing the children of the Church, as such: and it is not the duty or the custom of faithful nurses to deal out grudgingly the least that will support the infant. Their charge is too tender and precious to be set aside for any inconvenience: it must be attended to at all events, whatever else appear to be neglected.

Again, the office of rulers is a *λειτουργία*, an honourable public burthen: they are not therefore justified in seeking out ways to serve God which will cost them nothing. Such was the noble sentiment of King David; what a contrast does it make with those, which seem now to be avowed as the standing principles of most of the governments called free in Christendom! Does not the comparison fearfully convict this generation, of having quite lost the likeness of the man after God's own heart?

As to the amount of the sacred endowment: tithe among Christians was no doubt given on a

principle of generous piety. Nature teaches, and Scripture encourages, the honouring Almighty God with the choice of our substance; and He Himself, both before and after Moses, graciously approved the Tenth as a fit proportion. In days when men served God on Church principles, and not on principles of their own invention, the intimations of Scripture on this point were held sufficient. Signs were then given, that He would approve the gift of one Tenth; and with the Tenth accordingly He was honoured over the greater part of the Christian world. What things have come to now, we see: but we see not yet half the fatal result. In the mean time it is rather saddening to observe, that the defenders of the Church in resisting her spoilers are reduced to dwell on nothing so much as the danger of unsettling the rights of property: as if there were no such thing as sacrilege, no mention in Scripture of robbing God, no specification of tithes and offerings as the subject of such robbery, no curse on that whole nation, which shall ever be accessory to the like proceedings. After all allowance made for the necessity of meeting other people's prejudices, our tone would not surely be so lowered, we should not so entirely wave the point of Church property being the property of God, if we had not now of a long time been used to take a low tone about the Church herself, and to think little of God's presence within her, and of the way in which He is graciously pleased to

identify, if I may so speak, His interests with hers.

The same studious lowering of tones and views is observable in regard of another analogous and most material part of the holy system of the Church: the observance of the Lord's Day. The Church's provision for her little ones, grounded on the word of God, is one tenth of our substance, and one seventh of our time: and it is the business of those entrusted to nurse them, the Christian legislators and magistrates of every country, to guard as much as possible against their being defrauded of either privilege, the latter more especially, since God's Providence has more expressly called attention to it, by the mention made of it in the Decalogue. But there are some who would set the State above the Church, that is, Earth above Heaven, in this respect also, that they would denounce it as tyrannical, were a Christian government to interfere with the profaners of the holy day, even in the mildest way of protection for those who wish to keep it. And so far is the Church system forgotten, that others, who feel the sanctity of the subject, are fain to rest their argument on the sanctions of the elder covenant, in a manner which themselves would be the first to denounce on many other topics which might be mentioned. Whereas, would they consent to accept the Church's authority, as a sufficient warrant for the difference between that and all

other days, and to regard Christian governments as appointed Church, guardians over the weaker and more helpless sort especially, not in respect of this only, but of all other Christian privileges; they might not indeed meet with more success in their well-meant efforts, than they do at present, but they would at least bear a consistent and valuable testimony to sound principles in a corrupt and presumptuous age.

For indeed this matter of the Lord's Day is only one point of many in the great trust of educating, in the largest sense, the children of the Church; which trust includes the greater and weightier part of the duty of her nursing fathers.

Speaking of education as Christians, of course we understand not the management of children only, but of such as are children by station, understanding, or prejudice: and not merely regular instruction in Church doctrine, but regular communication also of Church privileges: that being in a manner true of the law of every Christian land, which the Apostle affirms concerning the Law of Moses: it is in the Divine purpose, and ought to be in effect, a kind of "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." Thus, the idea of the State as a foster-parent will illustrate those delicate questions, how far error is to be tolerated: when and in what measure even penal interference may be a Christian duty, interference, I mean, not of course with opinions, but with the reckless propagation

of them : what outward tests or sanctions may be wisely adopted or relaxed from time to time, for the encouragement of holy truth, and discountenance of antichristian error. All these points are included in the analogy drawn by the Scriptures from nursing parents. And the passage in Isaiah suggests the thought, whether Christian sovereigns be not appointed agents especially in the work of propagating the Gospel where yet unknown. “ I will lift up Mine Hand to the Gentiles, and set up My standard to the people ; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders ; and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers.” Surely it is a mean and low ambition in these statesmen of our time, which casts aside these promises, and thinks it more noble to be free from a Church, which would employ them in such a career as this.

In sum : if there be one thing more than another utterly condemned and shut out by that principle of Church and State connection, which Moses and the Prophets have delivered, and on which the Church in her better days acted,—the principle of the State being bound to *foster* the Church’s offspring :—it is the disposition to insolent indifference, and leaving things to take care of themselves. And is not this the very disposition which bears sway at present in what is called enlightened society ? Men seem inclined to declare with one voice, We

may for such and such reasons for a while patronize this or that Church : but we will not serve *the* Church ; we will not believe that there is a great universal plan, established by our Lord after His Resurrection, and now abiding in the world : we will not submit ourselves to any such claim.

In reply, we can only remind them, that the following words are the words of God, and were undoubtedly addressed to the Church, whose authority they reject : “ The nation and kingdom which will not serve thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.”

May God withhold the judgment from our country, and enable us to do something, each in his own sphere, however humble, towards that nursing care of Christ's little ones, which only can give a chance of averting it !

SERMON VIII.^a

PRIMITIVE TRADITION RECOGNISED IN HOLY SCRIPTURE.

2 TIM. i. 14.

That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

WHATEVER men may severally anticipate concerning the final issue of the many anxious discussions which at present occupy the Catholic Church in England, all, I suppose, must feel that for the time they occasion a great perplexity and doubtfulness of mind. We are beset on every side (the clergy more especially) with conflicting difficulties, and temptations to unworthy compromise. That man must be either very confident in the accuracy of his own views, or very highly favoured in respect of clearness of judgment, or very successful in keeping himself out of the way of all controversy, who has not repeatedly found himself

^a Preached in the Cathedral Church of Winchester, at the Visitation of the Worshipful and Reverend William Dealtry, D.D. Chancellor of the Diocese, September 27, 1836.

at a loss, within the last seven years, on such points as the following:—What are the limits of the civil power in ecclesiastical matters, and how far we may venture in the way of submission without sacrifice of Church principle: how the freedom of the Anglican Church may be vindicated against the exorbitant claims of Rome, and yet no disparagement ensue of the authority inherent in the Catholic Apostolical Church: again, how the method of voluntary combination, so generally resorted to in our days for important ecclesiastical objects, may be reconciled with entire deference to episcopal prerogative; how Christ's ministers may "study to be quiet," and yet do their duty as watchmen, and not let their people slumber in the midst of danger; and how they may best unite unwearied meekness in judging, and active Christian love, with strict reserve and timely censure towards every one that walketh disorderly. The time was, not long since, when many of these points appeared to most of us as mere historical curiosities. We felt, perhaps, that they were, abstractedly, of grave importance, but we thanked God that our lot was cast in times which required not of us, as pastors and stewards in Christ's service, any distinct consideration and settled views concerning them. Now things are different: the course of God's providence has permitted the enemies or prompted the defenders of the Church to lay bare her very foundations; and it has be-

come imperative on us all, in discharge of our Ordination vows, to make up our minds as well as we can, and endeavour to see our own way, on points which we should gladly, if we might, have taken on trust.

It cannot be safe to shrink from this duty, and say, as many seem inclined to do, that we could bear persecution itself better than the perplexity of considering such things, or the responsibility of deciding for ourselves, and agitating others, concerning them. We have put our hand to the plough, and we must not—we dare not—look back. It is too late for sworn and ordained Priests and Ministers in the Church of God to dream of drawing back from responsibility. The nature of the case contradicts the very thought. For what responsibility can be more fearful than *his*, who indolently and unthinkingly gives his assent to changes, which, for aught he knows, may prove not only ruinous in the event, but in theory and principle also opposed to the truths and ordinances wherewith Christ has put him in trust? Dismissing, therefore, as a snare of our great enemy, the false comfort which many of us, perhaps, are too much inclined to take to ourselves, from a notion that by not interfering we keep ourselves irresponsible, let us see whether the unprejudiced study of those parts of Scripture, which are obviously best suited to our case, may not supply us with a better and more genuine comfort, by furnishing some one clear

and unquestionable rule, which may go a good way in guiding us rightly, independent of all results: shewing us where our chief responsibility lies, and to which, among interests and duties apparently conflicting, we are bound always to give the preference.

It is natural, in such an inquiry, to turn immediately to the two Epistles to Timothy, especially the last. For undoubtedly it must have been to that holy Bishop a time of very great perplexity, when his guide and father in the faith was on the eve of departing from him: the heretics also, as appears from many passages, already beginning to infest the Asiatic Churches, according to St. Paul's own prophecy. It appears from the opening of the second Epistle, that when all doubt was taken away as to St. Paul's approaching martyrdom, his affectionate disciple was in danger of being overwhelmed by his sorrow for so great a loss, joined to his sense of the heavy burden which would be laid on himself, now left comparatively alone. To these two feelings in the breast of Timothy, the Apostle in his farewell letter addresses himself: remembering, as he says^b, the tears which Timothy had shed, perhaps when they had last parted from each other, and longing the more for the satisfaction of seeing him again. In the mean time, there are two words, which he seems studiously to repeat over and over, that he may leave them

^b Ch. iii. 4.

sounding, as it were, in his disciple's ears, for remembrancers of the two duties most pressing at the moment: ΚΑΚΟΠΙΑΘΗΣΩΝ, and ΠΑΡΑΚΑΤΑΘΗΚΗ: "endure hardness," and "keep that committed to thy charge."

First, with reference to the dejection of mind, by which Timothy was then suffering: "endure hardness," says the Apostle^c, "as a good soldier of Jesus Christ;" "endure^d affliction, make full proof of thy ministry;" "be thou^e partaker of the affliction of the Gospel, according to the power of God." The drift of all which warnings is the same as where he reminds the Thessalonians^f, "When we were with you, we told you that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know." Affliction, hardness, trial, tribulation, is the very atmosphere of the Gospel ministry: we never had cause to expect any thing else. "Do not, therefore," (so the Apostle implies,) "do not shrink thus over-tenderly from the thought of losing me, which, you now see, comes into your ordained portion of trouble." "Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner;" do not carry your affectionate regret so far as almost to cause an appearance of defective faith. Do not take it to heart so very bitterly, as if you in some sort regretted your Christian engagement, finding so much to be borne beyond your expectation; as if you were sorry that you had put so

^c Ch. ii. 3. ^d Ch. iv. 5. ^e Ch. i. 8. ^f 1 Thess. iii. 4.

much confidence in me. But, instead of vain regret, take comfort in doing your duty; resort to that fountain of supernatural grace which was opened for you when you were consecrated to be an Apostle. "Remember that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands. For the Spirit which we both of us then received was not a spirit of fear," of unworthy sadness and cowardice; excessive, unreasonable dejection can be no fruit of it.

Such were the tender expostulations and chidings of St. Paul, well beseeming the kindest and most thoughtful of parents recalling his own son in the faith to a manly firmness. Then, in the temper of a noble and true soldier, he propounds his own example, teaches his younger comrade the way of consolation which he found most effectual for himself. "Because I am ordained a herald and apostle and teacher, I suffer these things: but I am not ashamed, for I know in Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." And elsewhere^g, "I suffer evil, as a malefactor, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound." What can be more animating, what more affecting, than to witness a person like St. Paul, full of conscious energy, power, and usefulness, thus devoutly reconciling himself to that which, humanly speaking, would have seemed the

^g Ch. ii. 9.

most untimely interruption of his labours? It is clear, I think, that even St. Paul found this a severe struggle; but he cheers himself, as in his former imprisonment; when he wrote to the Philippians, that the taunts of his enemies on his confinement had turned out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel, causing his bonds in Christ to be spoken of in the palace of the Cæsars, and in all places: so that even those who in speaking of his sufferings meant nothing but envy and strife, did in a manner “preach Christ;”—make His Gospel known, and draw popular attention to His Name^h. Such I take to be the true meaning of that often alleged text; far from conveying the encouragement, which some think they find in it, to irregular and schismatical efforts, but fraught with abundant consolation for those, who being anxious for the Church in evil times, feel themselves precluded from active exertions on her behalf. They can always say to themselves, “The Word of God is not bound: He can make even envy and strife involuntary heralds of His cause.” Their fidelity in acting while they could is rewarded with the assurance of a strong faith, that when *their* work is over, God’s eternal and glorious work is still in progress, although they cannot see how.

But we dare not take this comfort to ourselves,—we dare not, in those instances where we find the Church bound and fettered, mitigate our

^h See Note (A) at the end of this Sermon.

regret by exulting remembrance of the expansive inherent force of divine truth,—except we be really, in some tolerable measure, doing our best for her, so far as we are at liberty. The sense of our own responsibility, and of our faithfulness to it, must lie at the root of all true and solid consolation.

To this, therefore, as the one thing needful, both for the cause and for himself, the Apostle most emphatically bespeaks his disciple's attention. He loses no opportunity of reminding him of the *παρακαταθήκη*, the charge, trust, deposit, which had been left jointly in both their hands, and in the hands of all commissioned as they were. Observe how naturally, with what dexterity of affection, he passes from the mention of his own trust to that of the same trust as committed to Timothy: "I am not ashamed, for I know in Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit, *τὴν παρακαταθήκην μου*, against that day. Hold fast the form," or, "abide by the pattern or standard, of wholesome words which thou hast heard from me, by faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing committed unto thee" (literally, the good and noble deposit) "keep, by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

Surely these are words in which we ourselves are concerned, as deeply as he was, to whom they were first written. We are so far in Timothy's case, that we are full of sorrow and perplexity at the condition in which we find the Church and

Body of Christ Jesus: we would fain lay hold of Timothy's and St. Paul's consolation: let us first see to it, that we neglect not the warning given. To the companion of Apostles that warning was plain and simple. The duty imposed on him, paramount to all others, was simply to keep safe and entire a certain trust committed to his charge; to that one vital object all considerations of present expediency, temporal comfort, visible, apparent edification, were to give way. What that treasure was, Timothy could not be ignorant; nor yet could he be doubtful as to the celestial aid, by which, if not wanting to himself, he would surely be enabled to preserve it. But in both respects some consideration is requisite, before we of this day can fully apply the case to ourselves. It is not obvious at first sight, what this trust or treasure was: nor (of course) whether we are partakers of it: and even supposing those points settled, there might still remain a doubt, whether we have the same help for the faithful discharge of our trust, the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. The consideration of these points in their order may not unfitly employ us on the present occasion.

1. And, first, as to the exact notion which we are to attach to the word *παρακαταθήκη*, "trust or deposit," in this place: I observe, that the very use of so general a word with the article implies that it had been by that time received among Christians as a term (if one may so speak) of their

own, a part of the vocabulary of the holy Catholic Church. A diligent eye may detect, in St. Paul's Epistles, many traces of the like use of language: current sayings, or senses of words, or formulæ, which the Apostle only just alludes to, as well known to all his readers. For instance, the expression, "This is a faithful saying," which occurs repeatedly in these latter Epistles, indicates, in all probability, so many Christian proverbs, familiar in the mouths of that generation of believers. Thus in the first Epistle to Timothy, we have, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinnersⁱ:' This is a faithful saying, 'If a man desire the office of a Bishop, he desireth a good work^k;' This is a faithful saying, 'That therefore we both labour, and suffer reproof, because we trust in the living God, Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe^l.'" In the second Epistle^m, "It is a faithful saying, 'If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us.'" And to Titus, after a brief summary of the Gospel way of salvation, which by the exact rhythm and order of its members might almost appear to be part of a primitive hymnⁿ, St. Paul adds the same clause, "Faithful is the saying." From all which I argue, that there

ⁱ Ch. i. 15.^k Ch. iii. 1.^l Ch. iv. 9, 10.^m Ch. ii. 11.ⁿ See Note (B) at the end of this Sermon.

was a certain set of "sayings" current among the Christians of that time, to which any allusion or appeal, however brief, would be presently understood. Nor will it be hard to find examples of single words, which had evidently acquired by that time a Christian sense; so that, even when used absolutely, they could only be taken by Christians in a particular relation: such words, I mean, as τὸ μυστήριον, for "the scheme of supernatural truth revealed in the Gospel, and more especially in the doctrine of our Lord's incarnation;" ὁ ἐχθρὸς, for "the evil spirit;" ἡ ὁδὸς, for "the profession of Christianity." These, and other examples which might be mentioned, make it surely not incredible, that ἡ παρακαταθήκη, "*the deposit, trust, or charge,*" conveyed to Christian ears in those days a peculiar and definite, I had almost said, a technical, meaning.

Now both this word and its kindred term, ἡ ἐντολή, "the commandment," are mentioned in connection with errors to be avoided in *doctrine*. Thus, Timothy is warned^a to "keep the deposit, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called." Again, on mention made of the "good confession," made by the same Timothy "before many witnesses," at the time of his first calling to eternal life,—which "good confession" can only mean the Apostles' Creed, or some corresponding formula, recited at baptism,—

^a 1 Tim. vi. 20.

St. Paul proceeds thus : “ I exhort thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep *the commandment* without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Does not this appear as if “ the confession” in the former verse had suggested the caution about “ the commandment” or “ commission” in the latter ? and if so, what more probable than that “ the commission” means the same treasure of doctrine which we know to have been embodied in the Confession or Creed ?

This interpretation of the noun *παρακαταθήκη*, “ deposit,” is confirmed by the repeated use of the kindred verb, *παρατίθεσθαι*, “ to entrust, or commit,” in reference to Christian doctrine. For example, “ This *commandment* I *commit* unto thee, son Timothy, that thou mightest charge some that they *preach no other doctrine*°.” Elsewhere (a passage which seems to be sufficient alone to warrant the proposed interpretation) Timothy is instructed concerning the things which he had heard from St. Paul, “ before many witnesses,” that is, as it should seem, at a kind of public charge at his ordination :—these he is directed to commit or entrust “ to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also^p.” Ability to *teach* is the thing required : it is plain, therefore, that the test related principally to *doctrine*^q.

° 1 Tim. i. 18, 3.

^p 2 Tim. ii. 2.

^q See Note (C) at the end of this Sermon.

Further, it will be observed that the phrase of the Apostle is absolute: *the* trust, not *your* trust; the great trust of all, in which whosoever participates has reason to consider himself especially responsible to the great Judge of heaven and earth. And it is implied that the charge of St. Paul and that of Timothy were one and the same. "Keep the good deposit," says the Apostle, "by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth *in us*." Now what St. Paul's trust was, the trust uppermost in his heart, he himself teaches, exclaiming, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, *I have kept the faith*." He does not say, "I have kept the flock, I have kept those left in my charge;" but, "I have kept the *faith*, the *truth* of Christ, the *doctrine* of the Gospel. I have watched it, and preserved it entire." Great as was the holy Apostle's anxiety for the souls which God had put under his care, his anxiety for the system of Christ, the kingdom of heaven, did at that moment apparently engross him more entirely. And it is clearly probable, that what he felt himself to be the main care, the chief trust of all, that he would recommend to his disciple in such words as those of the text, "That good thing which is committed unto thee, keep;" especially considering that those words immediately follow a caution which can only relate to doctrinal formulæ: "Hold fast," as a model for thyself, "the form of sound words," the course of healthful, orthodox interpretations and doctrines, "which

^r 2 Tim. iv. 7.

thou hast heard of me." That "form of sound words," is it not obviously the same with "the good deposit" in the next verse?

Thus the context leads to the same exposition which, as we have seen, the parallel passages suggest—an exposition ratified also by the general consent of Christian antiquity. The good deposit is commonly understood by the Fathers to mean the *truths* committed by St. Paul to Timothy. Thus, in the paraphrase ascribed to St. Jerome^s: "Watch over the deposit *of the faith*, entrusted to thy keeping by us. What thou hast not heard of me, though it were spoken by an angel, receive it not willingly." And a venerable Father of the third century, Hippolytus, having quoted the expressions, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy charge," and, "The things which thou hast heard of me before many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men," remarks^t, that "the

^s "Commendatum a nobis servandum tibi fidei depositum custodi. Quod a me non audisti, nec ab angelo si dicatur, libenter admittas." T. ix. 388. ed. Froben. Basil.

^t "Ορα δὲ μὴ εἰς ἀπίστους καὶ βλασφήμους γλώσσας ἐγκαταθῆ ταῦτα· κίνδυνος γὰρ οὐχ ὁ τυχῶν· μετάδος δὲ εὐλαβέσι καὶ πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις τοῖς ἐθέλουσι ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως μετὰ φόβου ζῆν· οὐ γὰρ μάτην ὁ μακάριος Ἀπόστολος παραινῶν Τιμοθέῳ λέγει· Ὡ Τιμόθεε, τὴν παρακαταθήκην φύλαξον, ἐκτρεπόμενος, κ. κ. λ. Καὶ πάλιν . . . ἃ ἤκουσας παρ' ἐμοῦ διὰ πολλῶν παρακλησέων, ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, κ. τ. λ. Εἰ οὖν ὁ μακάριος μετ' εὐλαβείας παρεδίδου ταῦτα, ἅπερ ἅπασιν εὐγνωστα ἦν, βλέπων τῷ Πνεύματι, ὅτι οὐ πάντων ἦν ἡ πίστις· πόσῳ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύσομεν, εἰ ἀπλῶς καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγια μεταδώσομεν βεβήλοις καὶ ἀναξίοις ἀνδράσιν; Dem. de Christo et Antichristo, ap. Biblioth. Patrum, Gallandi, t. ii. p. 418.

blessed Apostle used religious care in delivering these *truths*, which were easily accessible to all." And Vincent of Lerins^u; "Keep," says the Apostle, "that which is committed to thy charge; *the Catholic faith*, as a talent, preserve thou inviolate and unalloyed."

Upon the whole we may assume with some confidence, that the good thing left in Timothy's charge, thus absolutely to be kept at all events, was the treasure of Apostolical doctrines and Church rules^x: the rules and doctrines which made up the charter of Christ's kingdom.

2. The next question to be settled is, whether the precept in the text apply literally to us: that is, in other words, whether we have yet in our possession the identical deposit which St. Paul left with Timothy. For, *if* we have, mere natural piety would teach us to reverence and guard it as he was required to do.

^u Commonit. c. xii. "Quid est *depositum*? id est, quod tibi creditum est, non quod a te inventum; quod accepisti, non quod excogitasti; rem non ingenii, sed doctrinæ; non usurpationis privatæ, sed publicæ traditionis; rem ad te perductam, non a te prolatam; in qua non auctor debes esse, sed custos; non institutor, sed sector; non ducens, sed sequens. '*Depositum*,' inquit, '*custodi*;' *catholicæ fidei talentum* inviolatum illibatumque conserva."

^x The insertion of "Church rules" here has been objected to, as not being warranted by the preceding citations. But the Sacraments, at least, were from the beginning Church rules; and were not they part of the trust committed to Timothy, in common with all "Stewards of the Mysteries of God?"

Some will reply to this question at once, We have the holy Scriptures, and we know for certain that they contain all that is important in Timothy's trust. These would resolve the custody of the good deposit into the simple duty of preserving the Scriptures incorrupt, and maintaining them in their due estimation among Christians. Undoubtedly this would be in some respects the least troublesome, if it could be proved the most correct and dutiful way. But can it be so proved ?

We are naturally, if not reasonably, jealous of the word Tradition, associated as it is in our minds with the undue claims and pernicious errors of Rome. Yet must it not be owned, on fair consideration, that Timothy's deposit did comprise matter, independent of, and distinct from, the truths which are directly Scriptural? that it contained, besides the substance of Christian doctrine, a certain form, arrangement, selection, methodizing the whole, and distinguishing fundamentals; and also a certain system of Church practice, both in government, discipline, and worship; of which, whatever portion we can prove to be still remaining, ought to be religiously guarded by us, even for the same reason that we reverence and retain that which is more properly Scriptural, both being portions of the same divine treasure.

To these conclusions we are led by the consideration, first, that the truths and rules committed to Timothy's charge were at the time almost or

wholly unwritten. This is clear from the very date of the Epistles which mention that charge: the latest of which must have been composed many years before St. John's Gospel, and in the first of them the deposit in question is spoken of, not as an incomplete thing on its progress towards perfection, but as something so wholly sufficient, so unexceptionably accurate, as to require nothing but fidelity in its transmitters^y. The holy writings themselves intimate, that the persons to whom they were addressed were in possession of a body of truth and duty, totally distinct from themselves, and independent of them. Timothy, for instance, a few verses after the text, is enjoined to take measures for the transmission, not of holy Scripture, but of the things which he had heard of St. Paul among many witnesses^z. The Thessalonians had been exhorted to hold the traditions which they had received, whether by word or apostolical letter^a. They could not be exhorted to hold the Christian Scriptures, since at that time in all probability no Christian Scriptures yet existed, except perhaps St. Matthew's Gospel. Much later we find St. Peter declaring to the whole body of Oriental Christians, that in neither of his Epistles did he profess to reveal to them any new truth or duty, but to "stir up their minds by way of remembrance of the commandment of the Apostles of the

^y 1 Tim. i. 3; vi. 14, 20.

^z 2 Tim. ii. 2.

^a 2 Thess. ii. 15.

Lord and Saviour^b." St. John refers believers, for a standard of doctrine, to the word which they had heard from the beginning^c, and intimates that it was sufficient for their Christian communion if that word abode in them. If the Word, the Commandment, the Tradition, which the latest of these holy writers severally commend in these and similar passages, meant only or chiefly the Scriptures before written, would there not appear a more significant mention of those Scriptures; something nearer the tone of our own divines, when they are delivering precepts on the Rule of Faith? As it is, the phraseology of the Epistles exactly concurs with what we should be led to expect: that the Church would be already in possession of the substance of saving truth, in a sufficiently systematic form, by the sole teaching of the Apostles. As long as that teaching itself, or the accurate recollection of it, remained in the world, it must have constituted a standard or measure of Christian knowledge, though it had never seemed good to the Almighty to confer on us the additional boon of the books of the New Testament.

It can hardly be necessary to remind this audience, that these scattered notices are abundantly confirmed by the direct and formal testimony of the ecclesiastical writers of the age immediately following the Apostles. As often as Tertullian and Irenæus have false teachers to reprove, or un-

^b 2 S. Pet. iii. 1.

^c 1 S. John ii. 24.

evangelical corruptions to expose, do they not refer to the tradition of the whole Church, as to something independent of the written word, and sufficient at that time to refute heresy, even alone? Do they not employ Church tradition as parallel to Scripture, not as derived from it? and consequently as fixing the interpretation of disputed texts, not simply by the judgment of the Church, but by authority of that Holy Spirit which inspired the oral teaching itself, of which such tradition is the record. Their practice is throughout in accordance with the following sentence of Irenæus^d: “ We ought not to be still seeking among others for the truth, which it is easy to receive from the Church; since therein, as in a rich depository, the Apostles did most abundantly lodge all things appertaining to the truth: so that whoever will, may receive from her the waters of life. For the Church is the entrance to life: all the rest are but thieves and robbers. . . . And what if the Apostles themselves had left us no Scriptures? Ought we not to follow the course of tradition, such as they delivered it to those whom they entrusted with the Churches? Which rule is followed by many nations of the barbarians, those I mean who believe in Christ, without paper or ink, having salvation written in their hearts by the Spirit, and diligently keeping the old tradition.” Then having recited the substance of the Apostles’ Creed as a specimen

^d See Note (D) at the end of this Sermon.

of that tradition, he adds, "this faith those who without letters have believed, in respect of our language are indeed barbarians, but in respect of their views, habits, and conversation, have attained by faith a very high measure of illumination, and please God, walking in all justice, chastity, and wisdom. And if any one should relate to them in their own language the new inventions of the heretics, they would presently shut their ears and escape as far as possible, not enduring so much as to hear the profane discourse." This noble passage I rather quote, because it shews that the case which was just now put, of persons left without the Scriptures to depend on tradition alone, is not a mere dream of imagination, but at that time actually existed in some parts of the Christian world. There were instances, it seems, known to Irenæus, of true believers who did not as yet know any thing of the New Testament, yet were able to stop the mouths of heretics by merely avouching the ancient apostolical tradition. As was the condition, duty, and privileges, of those faithful and simple men, such would have been those of the whole Christian world, had the inspired Scriptures either remained unwritten, or perished with so many other monuments of antiquity. Faith in those divine truths with which the Church was originally entrusted would still have been required at the hands of Christian men; but the task of ascertaining those truths would have been far

harder and more delicate. Now that it has pleased our gracious God to bestow on us, over and above, the use of His written word, can we be justified in slighting the original gift, on pretence of being able to do without it? Surely, in whatever respect any tradition is really apostolical, to think lightly of it must be the same *kind* of sin, as if those unlearned and remote Christians, of whom Irenæus speaks, had thought lightly of the New Testament when it came to be propounded to them. We see at once in what manner sincere reverence for God's truth would lead them to treat the portions of His *written* word, as they were brought successively under their notice. If we will be impartial, we cannot hide it from ourselves, that His *unwritten* word, if it can be any how authenticated, must necessarily demand the same reverence from us; and for exactly the same reason: *because it is His word.*

But, further: the fact is clearly demonstrable from Scripture, that as long as the canon of the New Testament was incomplete, the unwritten system served as a test even for the Apostles' own writings. Nothing was to be read, as canonical, except it agreed with the faith delivered once for all to the first generation of the saints. The directions of St. Paul on this subject are perfectly clear, and without reserve. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let

him be anathema." And St. John, in his Epistles, strikes continually on the same chord. His language sounds like an emphatical protest against any suspicion of novelty or originality in his teaching. "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but the old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye heard from the beginning." He writes to them as to persons knowing the truth; knowing all things; not needing that any man teach them. He forbids their acquiescing without trial in any pretensions to spiritual gifts: he would have the spirits tried, whether they be of God, whatever their claim to be confirmed even by miracle; and the test or touchstone which he recommends is, agreement with the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation. "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God^d." And his second Epistle speaks just the same language: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son^e."

I do not see how we can be wrong in inferring, from these and similar passages, that the faith once for all delivered to the saints, in other words, Apostolical Tradition, was divinely appointed in the

^d S. John ii. 7, 20, 21, 27; iv. 1, 3.

^e 2 S. John 9.

Church as the touchstone of canonical Scripture itself. No writing, however plausible the appearance of its having come from the Apostles, was to be accepted as theirs, if it taught any other doctrine than what they at first delivered : rather both it and its writers were to be anathema.

This use of apostolical tradition may well correct the presumptuous irreverence of disparaging the Fathers under a plea of magnifying Scripture. Here is a tradition so highly honoured by the Almighty Founder and Guide of the Church, as to be made the standard and rule of His own divine Scriptures. The very writings of the Apostles were to be first tried by it, before they could be incorporated into the canon. Thus the Scriptures themselves, as it were, do homage to the tradition of the Apostles ; the despisers, therefore, of that tradition take part, inadvertently or profanely, with the despisers of the Scripture itself^f.

On the other hand, it is no less evident that Scripture, being once ascertained, became in its turn a test for every thing claiming to be of apostolical tradition. But on this part of the subject there is the less occasion to dwell, it being, I suppose, allowed on all hands. Only it may be well to notice a distinction not always sufficiently kept in view by modern writers on the rule of faith ;

^f It is assumed in this paragraph, that where Scripture is silent or ambiguous, consent of the Fathers is a probable index of apostolical tradition. See below, p. 198—208.

viz. that whereas Scripture was from the beginning appealed to, of course, as a test of *positive* truth, it could only then be appealed to *negatively*, that is, its silence could then only be quoted as excluding any point from the list of truths necessary to salvation, when itself had attained a certain degree of completeness. And this perhaps may be one reason why the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is no where expressly affirmed in Scripture itself⁸. The character which our Article justly assigns to the Bible, of “so containing all things necessary to salvation, that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation:”—this character the Bible could not, from the very force of the terms, acquire, until a sufficient portion of its contents had appeared, to include in one place or another every one of such fundamentals. Nor are we sure of this condition having been fulfilled until the appearance of St. John’s Gospel and first Epistle, the latest, probably, of those canonical Scriptures, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. This consideration may serve to account for the comparative rareness of quotations from the New Testament in the writings of the first century; in the Epistle of St. Clement, for instance, who, while he produces in almost every paragraph

⁸ See Note (E) at the end of this Sermon.

some testimony from the Jewish Scriptures, has only three or four references to the New Testament: where such might be expected, he rather uses to remind men of “the depths of divine knowledge, which they had looked into^h;” of “the immortal knowledge, whereof they had tastedⁱ;” and of the apostolical examples which they had seen. Whereas the writers of the following age, Irenæus, Tertullian, and the rest, add to the argument from tradition, on which in itself they lay as much stress as St. Clement, authorities and arguments from the New Testament, much in the manner of controversialists of our own time.

From all this I gather, that in the interval between Clement and Ignatius on the one hand, Irenæus and Tertullian on the other, the canon of the New Testament had first become fixed and notorious, and then the fact had been observed, which is stated in our Article; That the fundamental point of doctrine is contained in the unquestioned books of that canon, taken along with the Hebrew Scriptures. And this observation, being once made, would of course immediately suggest that golden rule, not of the Anglican only, but of the Catholic Church; That nothing is to be insisted on as a point of faith necessary to salvation, but what is contained in, or may be proved by, canonical Scripture. At any rate it is unquestionable, that by the time of Irenæus, that is,

^h c. 40.

ⁱ c. 36.

towards the end of the second century, the fact had been universally recognised, and the maxim thoroughly grounded and incorporated into the system of the Catholic Church^{*}.

Reserving thus the claim of Scripture to be sole and paramount as a rule of faith, we may now, I think, venture to assume, from the nature of the case, the incidental testimony of Scripture, and the direct assertions of the Fathers, that it was an unwritten system which the holy writers spoke of, when they so earnestly recommended the deposit, the commandment, the word heard from the beginning, to the reverential care both of pastors and of all Christian people.

Will it be said, "This is no concern of ours; it may be true in fact, but it yields no practical result; the traditionary system, whatever it was, having long ago passed away, except so far as it has been preserved in inspired writings?" This may be stated, and often is so, but can hardly be proved.

For in the first place, as long as it is only doubtful whether any statement or precept is part of the Apostolic system or no, so long a mind imbued with true devotion will treat that statement or precept with reverence, will not rudely reject or scorn it, lest he refuse to entertain an angel unawares. So long the mere fact of its not being contained in

^{*} See note (F) at the end of this Sermon.

Scripture cannot be felt as a justification for casting it aside, any more than we should venture to disparage it on account of its not being revealed in any particular *book* of Scripture, which we might happen to value above the rest. Although not in Scripture, it may yet be a part of *their* rule, concerning whom the Son of God has declared, "He that heareth you, heareth Me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me."

But in truth it may be proved to the satisfaction of any reasonable mind, that not a few fragments yet remain, very precious and sacred fragments, of the unwritten teaching of the first age of the Church. The paramount authority, for example, of the successors of the Apostles in Church government; the threefold Order established from the beginning; the virtue of the blessed Eucharist as a commemorative sacrifice; infant Baptism; and above all, the Catholic doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity, as contained in the Nicene Creed. All these, however surely confirmed from Scripture, are yet ascertainable parts of the primitive, unwritten system, of which we yet enjoy the benefit. If any one ask, how we ascertain them; we answer, by application of the well-known rule, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*: Antiquity, Universality, Catholicity: tests similar to those which jurists are used to apply to the common or unwritten laws of any realm. If a maxim or custom can be traced back to a time whereof the memory of man runneth not

to the contrary; if it pervade all the different courts, established in different provinces for the administration of justice; and, thirdly, if it be generally acknowledged in such sort, that contrary decisions have been disallowed and held invalid: then, whatever the exceptions to it may be, it is presumed to be part and parcel of our common law. On principles exactly analogous, the Church practice and rules above mentioned, and several others, ought, we contend, apart from all Scripture evidence, to be received as traditionary or common laws ecclesiastical. They who contend that the very notion of such tradition is a mere dream and extravagance; who plead against it the uncertainty of history, the loss or probable corruption of records, the exceptions, deviations, interruptions which have occurred through the temporary prevalence of tyranny, heresy, or schism; must, if they would be consistent, deny the validity of the most important portion of the laws of this and of most other old countries.

It is not, therefore, antecedently impossible that a system of tradition, subsidiary to the Scriptures, might yet exist in the commonwealth or city of God. The rest is matter of investigation in each case, whether any given rule, interpretation, or custom, be traditionary in the required sense. But it will not be going too far into particulars, and may help to the understanding and application of the whole argument, if I point out three distinct

fields of Christian knowledge, in neither of which can we advance satisfactorily or safely without constant appeal to tradition, such as has been described.

The first is, the *System and Arrangement of fundamental Articles*, so far as they have come down to us systematic and arranged. We, that is all of the Anglican Church who have had any regular training in theology, are so early taught to trace the Creed in the Scriptures, and to refer at once certain portions of both Testaments to certain high mysteries of the Catholic faith, that it commonly appears to ourselves as though we had learned those mysteries directly from the Scriptures. But there are few, surely, who on careful recollection would not be compelled to acknowledge that the Creed, or some corresponding catechetical instruction, had prepossessed them with these truths, before ever they thought of proving them from Holy Writ. I need hardly remind you of the unquestioned historical fact, that the very Nicene Creed itself, to which perhaps of all *formulæ* we are most indebted for our sound belief in the proper divinity of the Son of God—even this Creed had its origin, not from Scripture, but from tradition. The three hundred Bishops who joined in its promulgation did not profess to have collected it out of the Bible, but simply to express the faith which each of them had found in the Church which he represented, received by tradition from the Apo-

stles¹. Nor is this any disparagement to Scripture, nor need it excite any alarm for the great fundamental verity itself, which the Creed was meant to assert; any more than it would disparage the works of God, or shake the foundation of our faith in natural religion, were one to affirm that the power and Godhead of the Creator, although unquestionably proveable from the things which are made, would yet have remained unknown to the mass of mankind, but for primitive tradition, or subsequent revelation of it.

The second great subject, on which most of us are unconsciously indebted to the ancient Catholic tradition, is the *Interpretation of Scripture*, especially those parts of which less obviously relate to the mysteries of the Gospel. Catholic tradition bears upon Scripture interpretation, not only indirectly, by supplying, as just now stated, certain great landmarks of apostolical doctrine, conformably to which the written statements are all to be interpreted; but also, in numerous cases, directly; setting the Church's seal, as it were, upon one among many possible expositions of particular passages. For example: how else could we know, with tolerable certainty, that Melchisedek's feast is a type of the blessed eucharist^m? or that the

¹ See note (G) at the end of this Sermon.

^m For this, see S. Cyprian, Ep. 63. p. 149. ed. Fell; S. Augustin, de Civ. Dei, xviii. 20; S. Jerome, Ep. ad Marcellam, t. i.

book of Canticles is an allegory, representing the mystical union betwixt Christ and his Churchⁿ? or that Wisdom, in the book of Proverbs, is a Name of the second Person in the Most Holy Trinity^o? All which interpretations, the moment they are heard, approve themselves to an unprejudiced mind, and must in all likelihood have come spontaneously into many readers' thoughts. But it may be questioned whether we could ever have arrived at more than a plausible conjecture regarding them, but for the constant agreement of the early Church, taking notice every where, in these and the like instances, of the manner in which the Old Testament was divinely accommodated to the wonders of Christ's religion.

The third great field of apostolical tradition lies among *practical* matters, the *Discipline, Formula-ries,* and *Rites* of the Church of Christ: in regard

p. 123. ed. Frob. Basil. These with the distinct acknowledgment in the ancient Roman Liturgy, may perhaps be considered sufficient to represent the sense of the Western Churches. Among the Greeks, S. Chrysostom (on Gen. xiv.) clearly implies the same construction. But the reserve maintained by them on all liturgical subjects may account for their comparative silence on this point, even supposing them to have received the same interpretation.

ⁿ In this I believe all the Fathers who quote that divine Book (and most of them do so often) are agreed.

^o The disputes on the text, Proverbs viii. 22, at the Nicene Council, are sufficient to prove agreement on this point. It is well known that the Arians alleged it, as it stands in the Septuagint, (ὁ Κύριος ἔκτισέ με,) as a proof of the Son's inferiority. The Catholics never disputed the application of the text to our Lord, but denied the deduction from it.

of which, reason tells us that the Church Apostolical must here have had *some* method and system; yet it is evident to the very eye that the New Testament exhibits no such system in form, but only fragments and other indications of one in full operation at the time, and well known to those for whom the Apostles were writing. These fragments being found to coincide with similar but more copious indications in later Church records; consideration also being had of the religious reverence wherewith in those ages every thing primitive was regarded, and of the charitable jealousy of the Churches, watching each other for the purpose of remonstrating against unwarrantable deviations; we need not fear to accept in its fulness, on all such matters, the well-known rule to St. Augustin, which I give in the words of Hooker^p: “Whatsoever positive order the whole Church every where doth observe, the same it must needs have received from the very Apostles themselves; unless, perhaps, some general council were the authors of it.” In this kind no one at all versed in Church history can be at a loss for examples of the benefit which the present Church derives from the chain of primitive tradition. Without its aid, humanly speaking, I do not see how we could now retain either real inward communion with our Lord through His Apostles, or the very

^p E. P. vii. v. 3. from Aug. Ep. 108. t. ii. 125.

outward face of God's Church and kingdom among us. Not to dwell on disputable cases: how, but by the tradition and practice of the early Church, can we demonstrate the observance of Sunday as the holiest day, or the permanent separation of the clergy from the people as a distinct order? or where, except in the primitive Liturgies, a main branch of that tradition, can we find assurance that in the Holy Eucharist we consecrate as the Apostles did, and, consequently, that the cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the Blood of Christ, and the bread which we break the communion of the Body of Christ?

Whether, then, we look to Discipline, to Interpretation, or to Doctrine, every way we see reason to be thankful for many fragments of apostolical practice and teaching, most needful to guide us in the right use of Holy Scripture.

So it is, however, that either from impatience of authority, or dislike of trouble, or excessive dread of Romish error, tradition has become to most of us an unpalatable word, and we love not to allow that in any sense we rest our faith and practice upon it. And, as commonly happens when the mind is first made up, and reasons are to be found afterwards, objections the most contradictory are brought to justify this our determined disregard of antiquity. Sometimes it is urged that the matters involved are so many, so intricate and

various, and demand such minute research, that it is out of the question bringing them within the reach of the great body of the clergy, however learned; sometimes, on the contrary, it is maintained, that the points agreed on in the whole ancient Church are obviously so few, there have been such constant discussions and waverings of opinion, that after all there is no such thing as primitive Catholic tradition: what is called such being merely the register of the dictates of that which has proved, on the whole, the strongest and most fashionable party in the Church^r. The one statement makes the field so wide, that it is impossible not to lose one's way in it; the other so contracted, that occupying it is no advantage. It is obvious that both objections cannot stand together; and as might be expected, the truth lies between the two. On the one hand, we are not to imagine that every usage which has prevailed in any part of the Church, every opinion which has been upheld even among orthodox Fathers, claims to have been part of the system of the Apostles. On the other hand, we cannot surely deny such claim to those rules, in which *all* primitive Councils are uniform, those rites and formularies which are found in *all* primitive Liturgies, and those interpretations and principles of interpretation in which *all* orthodox Fathers agree;

^r See Note (H) at the end of this Sermon.

more especially when they produce them as undoubted and authoritative. Now the genuine canons of the primitive Councils, and the genuine fragments of the primitive Liturgies, are reducible into a small space; even although we go so low down in both as the division of the Eastern and Western Churches, including the six first Councils general, and excluding image-worship and similar corruptions by authority. As far, therefore, as the Councils and Liturgies are concerned, tracing the remnant of apostolical tradition need not prove such a very overwhelming task. To establish consent among the Fathers is, doubtless, a far more laborious process; easiest, however, where it is most desirable, namely, in the great points of faith and worship, as recurring continually, and implied in all other discussions. What remains is chiefly interpretation of Scripture; a precious, inexhaustible mine of primitive knowledge, to such as have the zeal to explore it, but not essential to the fixing of the main outlines. Leaving out, for the present, all such incidental discussions, and confining our view to that which touches the foundation, we shall find that the matters are neither few nor unimportant, which are settled by traditionary evidence within reach of common students. Were they much fewer than they are, and less important, still, as unquestionable relics of the Apostles, a devout and thoughtful mind would prize them for their

authors' sake, and for the sake of the lost treasure, whereof they are portions. To forget and disparage them, would be a hard and unnatural thing, like coldly refusing due reverence to the dead. As it is, by the gracious Providence of Almighty God, the points of Catholic consent known by tradition constitute the knots and ties of the whole system; being such as these: the canon of Scripture, the full doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, the oblation and consecration of the Eucharist, the apostolical succession; truths and orders soon enumerated, but such as to extend in vital efficacy through every part of the great scheme of the Church. What, then, if the Church in our time, for the sins of Christians, should have lost more or less of "that good thing," the perfect apostolical body of government, doctrine, and sacramental grace, committed to St. Paul first, and by him to Timothy? It is not the less our duty, and by God's grace we will regard it as our high privilege, to keep unwearied watch over what remains, and to preserve it, "by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

3. These concluding words, while they supply an additional reason for extreme jealousy of our precious apostolical relics, open to us the appointed way of guarding what remains, and if one might be so happy, of recovering more: a way not our

own, but strictly and properly supernatural. And thus we are conducted to the final point of our enquiry, Whether we, the existing Ministers of the Church, have the same grace dwelling in us, by which Timothy was exhorted to maintain his trust.

Now certainly the obvious meaning of the text is, that the treasure of sound doctrine was to be guarded by the grace of the Apostolical Succession. For St. Paul speaks of the Holy Ghost dwelling *in us*; that is, in himself and Timothy: and how it had passed from him to Timothy had been expressed a few verses before; “ I will that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands.” The Church of England, you will remember, supplies full warrant for this interpretation; by directing the same phrase to be solemnly repeated at the consecration of every Bishop: “ Remember that thou stir up the grace of God *which is given thee by the imposition of our hands*; and also where, in ordaining a Bishop or Presbyter, the solemn words are spoken, “ Receive the Holy Ghost.” Our Church, therefore, does not teach us to consider the Holy Ghost dwelling in St. Paul and Timothy as properly miraculous, a gift of extraordinary grace; but as their portion of that Spirit which was to be poured out on all Apostles, and successors of the Apostles, for ever. It was not what is commonly called miraculous; yet it was altogether supernatural. For no natural or acquired virtue or talent, though it might be

called the *gift* of the Holy Ghost, would ever be designated as the Holy Ghost Himself abiding in a man. Neither was it the preventing or assisting grace, common to all Christian persons; for it was given to Timothy in particular by imposition of St. Paul's hands. It could only be, what the Church interprets it, apostolical or episcopal grace.

Apostolical, then, or episcopal grace is by God's ordinance the guardian of sound doctrine; the Spirit abiding in Timothy is to watch incessantly the deposit or trust of divine truth left in his charge; and where the one, the succession, fails, there, as this verse would lead us to expect, and as all Church history proves, the other, the truth of doctrine, is immediately in imminent jeopardy.

Here, then, we seem to have arrived at one cardinal point at least, whereby we may shape our course in times and emergencies more than usually perplexing. We are to look before all things to the integrity of the good deposit, the orthodox faith, the Creed of the Apostolical Church, guaranteed to us by Holy Scripture, and by consent of pure antiquity. Present opportunities of doing good; external quietness, peace, and order; a good understanding with the temporal and civil power; the love and co-operation of those committed to our charge;—these, and all other pastoral consolations, must be given up, though it be with a heavy heart, rather than we should yield one

jot or one tittle of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

And whereas the dangers to that faith vary according to the differences of times, interests, and opinions; and sometimes the scriptural, sometimes the traditionary safeguards of it appear to be more immediately threatened; both must be watched with jealous and impartial care, since comparative neglect of either is sure to be attended with ill consequences to both. Thus the reverence of the Latin Church for tradition, being applied unscrupulously, and without the necessary check from Scripture, to opinions and practices of a date comparatively recent, has led a large portion of Christendom to disuse and contempt, not of Scripture only, but of that real and sure tradition, which they might and ought to have religiously depended upon. On the other hand, is there not reason to fear that the Holy Scriptures themselves are fast losing reverence, through the resolute defiance of tradition, which some affect, in conformity, as they suppose, with the maxim, that the Bible only is the religion of Protestants? Surely it is no rare nor unnatural result, if such as are trained to this principle, being left, as some one has said, alone with their Bibles^a, use their supposed liberty of interpretation, first in explaining away the mysterious meaning, and afterwards in lowering or evading the supernatural authority, of the very

^a Hooker, E. P. Pref. vii. 7.

Scriptures which at first they deferred to exclusively. And no wonder; since among the traditional truths which they are taught to undervalue is the canon of Scripture itself, and the principle also, that fundamental articles of belief must be sought for in Scripture. In short, the sacred building is so divinely, though invisibly, cemented, that, for aught we know, it is impossible to remove any portion, either of scriptural or traditional truth, without weakening the whole arch. We, to whom the whole is committed, under the most solemn of all pledges, and with the actual gift of the all-sufficient Spirit to aid us in redeeming that pledge; let us, above all things, beware of the presumption of selecting for ourselves among the truths and laws of the Most High, *which* we will retain, and *which* we may venture to dispense with.

In the next place, let us beware of novelty: novelty, I mean, as compared with the apostolic age; not the mere appearance of novelty as compared with the current notions of our time. For it is self-evident, that if in any age or country any portion of apostolical truth be lost, whenever it is revived it must for the time look new; and its maintainers will have to contend with the prejudice which constantly waits on the disturbers of things established. Not novelty, therefore, relative to us, but novelty relative to the primitive and original standard, is the thing above all to be deprecated in the whole of theology, by whatever

plausible air of originality, ingenuity, completeness, it may seem to recommend itself.

Observe under what a fearful penalty, in a warning parallel to that of the text, St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, discourages every intrusion of speculative doctrine. The apostasy, he tells them, will come; the wicked one shall be revealed, actuated by Satan to deceive them that perish; "on whom God will send strong delusion, that they may believe a lie." And then he proceeds, "Wherefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." Is not this equivalent to saying, that whoever is studious of novelty in religion is in a way to take part with Antichrist; that the only security against him, and the spirit which prepares the way for him, is to hold the apostolical doctrine, whether taught in word or in writing; and to exclude all additions, however tempting to human ingenuity and love of system, however acutely they may appear to be reasoned out, and to fall in with allowed principles?

Had this rule been faithfully kept, it would have preserved the Church just as effectually from the assertion of transubstantiation on the one hand, as from the denial of Christ's real presence on the other hand. The two errors in the original are perhaps but rationalism in different forms; endeavours to explain away, and bring nearer to the human intellect, that which had been left thoroughly mysterious both

by Scripture and tradition. They would both turn the attention of men from the real life-giving miracle to mere metaphysical or grammatical subtilities, such as our fathers never knew.

Observe, again, the phraseology of the Apostle, how it is formed throughout upon the supposition, that in the substance of the faith there is no such thing as improvement, discovery, evolution of new truths; none of those processes, which are the pride of human reason and knowledge, find any place here. Here the one thing needful is to “*retain* the mystery of the faith;” to “*abide* in the good instruction whereto we have already attained;” to “*teach* no *other* doctrine;” to be on our guard against those who resist the truth under pretence of “*proceeding* further,” assured that such, although they seem to be “*ever learning*,” shall never be able to “*come* to the knowledge of the truth;” they will “*proceed*” indeed, but it will be from bad to worse^t. All these cautions, and others no less fearful, the Holy Spirit has left for our admonition, directed not against any positive wrong opinion, but in general against the fatal error of treating theology like any human science, as a subject in which every succeeding age might be expected to advance on the former^u.

Nor is the warning less important, nor the ap-

^t 1 Tim. iii. 9; iv. 6; i. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 7, 9, 13. Προκόψουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον, πλανῶντες καὶ πλανῶμενοι.

^u See note (I) at the end of this Sermon.

plication to our times less certain, where Timothy is enjoined* to "keep that committed to his charge, turning away from profane, empty verbal discussions and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called." The allusion was probably in the first instance to the low-minded empirical system of the Gnostics. But the words are not much less appropriate to that which may be called the *Nominalism* of our days; I mean, the habit of resolving the high mysteries of the faith into mere circumstances of language, methods of speaking adapted to our weak understanding, but with no real counterpart in the nature of things. Whoever takes this line must needs hold the tradition of antiquity cheap, since it is based altogether on the supposition which he rejects as unphilosophical. Thus slighting tradition, and explaining away Scripture, there is no saying what pernicious heresy such a theorist may not fall into, if not happily guarded against himself by feelings and prejudices more reasonable than all his reasoning. Mean time the warning of Scripture is express: that they who "profess" such things may be expected to "err concerning the faith." And it is plain, that if at any time either the high places of the Church, or the schools of theological knowledge, should be left in such keeping, the guardians of the good deposit would be bound to direct especial attention that way, and not permit

* 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

things to pass away, as in a dream, before men are aware.

This leads directly to the recollection of a third danger, to which the Church seems especially exposed at this moment; I mean, that which is commonly entitled *Erastianism*; the Church betraying to the civil power more or less of the good deposit, which our Lord had put exclusively into her hands. This is a form of compromise with the world, for which no occasion was given by the circumstances of the Apostles: a trial peculiar to times like ours, when the governors of the world profess to have become the servants of our Lord and of His Christ. We cannot therefore look in the New Testament for literal instruction how to behave with regard to this delicate and dangerous part of our duty. The Gospel affording no express rules or precedents, we are thrown first upon the many analogous cases which the inspired records of the Jewish history supply; and then upon the conduct and determinations of the Catholic Church, in those centuries of her establishment during which the primitive system existed in something like integrity, to guide her demeanour in her altered condition. Yet, undoubtedly, the general rule, Keep the deposit, affects our relations to the civil authorities more immediately than persons unversed in Church matters might imagine. If we are to understand by "the deposit," the faith once for all committed

to Christians; and if the Apostolical Succession be the appointed guard of that faith; and if the charter of the Succession, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you," convey the power of Church government as well as that of administering Sacraments; then every undue sacrifice of the power of Church government to any earthly power is an infringement of the charter, and renders the deposit of the faith less secure. For the sake therefore of the very foundation of sound doctrine, and not only for the sake of peace and order in the Church, ecclesiastical government, as well as the custody of the Sacraments, should be jealously reserved in those hands to which Christ originally entrusted it. Nor do I see how it can be less than a sacred duty, however painful, and to human eyes unavailing, to protest, if we can do no more, against unauthorized intrusions on Church government, as every one will readily allow we ought to protest against unauthorized administration of Sacraments^v.

Such being the object for which we are set in defence, and such the enemies with whom we have to contend; such also the heavenly Assistant, dwelling in us and fighting on our side; it cannot be hard to perceive with what dispositions we ought to address ourselves to that holy warfare. It will not do to shrink from responsibility, or

^v See note (K) at the end of this Sermon.

to be over scrupulous in calculating immediate results. Once let us be reasonably assured that we are in the way of our duty, really keeping the good deposit; and then, to use the words of the Prophet, we may “set our faces like a flint, and need not be ashamed.” Then, as often as misgivings and alarms come over us, we must “stir up the grace of God which is in us by imposition of apostolic hands.” For “God hath not given us a Spirit of cowardice^z, but of power, and of love, and of brotherly correction and reproof^a;” a Spirit that brings with Him an invisible but real *power*, to open and shut the kingdom of heaven in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; a Spirit of never-failing *love* and *charity* to men’s souls, to guide us in the exercise of that more than human power; and, lastly, a Spirit of kind and fatherly, yet, if need be, uncompromising and fearless *rebuke*.

Let us be only true to our sacred trust: let us put every thing else by for the sake of handing down the whole counsel of God, our good deposit, entire as we received it: and who knows but we may by God’s mercy be made instrumental in saving the English Church from ruin not unlike that which has fallen on Ephesus, Smyrna, or Sardis? At any rate, the Church Catholic, in one country or another, we are sure, will survive and triumph. As of old she has stood before kings and

^z Δειλίας.

^a Σωφρονισμοῦ.

governors, and it turned to her for a testimony, so now blessed are they whom Divine Providence shall choose and enable worthily to support her cause against popular delusion and tyranny. We, indeed, as Priests of the second order, are but under-labourers in that most holy cause. Yet the least and lowest among us may look for his share of the blessing, as he has undoubtedly his share of the burthen and of the peril. Is there not a hope, that by resolute self-denial and strict and calm fidelity to our ordination vows, we may not only aid in preserving that which remains, but also may help to revive in some measure, in this or some other portion of the Christian world, more of the system and spirit of the apostolical age? New truths, in the proper sense of the word, we neither can nor wish to arrive at. But the monuments of antiquity may disclose to our devout perusal much that will be to this age new, because it has been mislaid or forgotten; and we may attain to a light and clearness, which we now dream not of, in our comprehension of the faith and discipline of Christ. We may succeed beyond what humanly appears possible in rekindling a primitive zeal among those who shall be committed to our charge. Even as Abraham, neglecting all earthly objects, “taught his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment;” and one part of his reward was, that “God would

not hide from Abraham the thing which He did^b;" another, that he was made the glorious and favoured instrument for transmitting divine truth through a fallen and corrupt age.

^b Gen. xviii. 17—19.

NOTES.

NOTE A, p. 179.

Philip. i. 15—18. The construction here adopted varies a little from that commonly received. It may be as well, therefore, briefly to state the exact import of it, and the grounds on which it is preferred. It supposes that the words *κηρύσσειν* and *καταγγέλλειν*, are not used here in any technical or official sense, which might answer to the English word *preaching*, taken as in our version of the Bible, but that they represent the occasional though providential result of St. Paul's imprisonment having been made the subject of conversation at Rome. Some spoke of it as faithful Christians; others, the Judaizers more especially, as jealous enemies of Christianity: both became in a certain sense heralds of Christ, the one sincerely and intentionally, speaking the word, as he says just above, the more boldly for his bonds; the other occasionally, without any purpose of their own. Clearly the words will bear this construction. And the ancient interpreters unite in denying the applicability of St. Paul's expressions to heretical teaching. So Tertullian, *adv. Marcion*, lib. v. c. 20. having quoted the passage from St. Paul, remarks, that "this was the natural place for excepting to the substance of the preaching complained of, had any

variation of that kind been the cause of this great diversity of feeling. But the Apostle states the irregularity to exist in the motives and tempers of men only, not in their standards of mysterious doctrine. His manner of speaking shews, that with whatever purpose they preached, it was one God Whom they preached, and one Christ. 'Therefore,' he adds, 'it is nothing to me, whether in pretence or in truth Christ be preached;' because it was still the same who was preached, whether with pretended or with real faithfulness. It was in respect of their good faith in preaching that he used the phrase '*in truth*,' not in respect of the rule of doctrine itself, which they preached. For the rule was all the time one; but some had genuine, *i. e.* simple good faith in delivering it; others were too full of subtilties." Again, it appears that in St. Cyprian's time, some had argued from this passage of St. Paul in favour of allowing heretical baptism. St. Cyprian's reply is, "He was not speaking of heretics, nor of their baptism. We cannot shew that he has here laid down any rule pertaining thereto. He was speaking of Christians walking, some disorderly, and contrary to Church discipline; some, through fear of God, preserving evangelical verity. . . . Now, it is one thing for those within the Church to speak in the name of Christ; another thing for those without (*i. e.* heretics) to baptize in the name of Christ." Ep. ad Jubaian. p. 204. ed. Fell. comp. Firmilian. ad Cyprian. p. 226. See also S. Chrys. *in loco*, who agrees with the preceding Father in not interpreting the passage of heretics, but is more express than they in supposing, that it was some sort of formal preaching of which St. Paul complains. It seems, however, a hard supposition, that any should have literally preached the truth of Christ, and exposed themselves to persecution, for the sake of exasperating the emperor against St. Paul. In this, there-

fore, it may be excusable to depart from St. Chrysostom, and rather to understand κηρύσσειν and καταγγέλλειν, when applied to the adversaries, in a secondary sense, of the pains taken by them to spread the report of the Apostle's imprisonment, which they considered a check and discredit to the Gospel.

NOTE B, p. 182.

The validity of this conjecture may be best estimated by simply comparing the passage in the original with the preceding and subsequent verses:—

Ἡμεν γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοὶ, μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους.

Ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ΘΕΟΥ,

οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ᾧν ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς,

ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν αὐτοῦ ἔλεον ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς,

διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας, καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ ἍΓΙΟΥ,

οὗ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς πλουσίως, διὰ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν

ἵνα, δικαιωθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι,

κληρονόμοι γενώμεθα κατ' ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου.

Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· καὶ περὶ τούτων βούλομαί σε διαβεβαιουῖσθαι, ἵνα φροντίζωσι καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευκότες τῷ ΘΕΩ.

NOTE C, p. 184.

The only other notion of the παρακαταθήκη, or apostolical deposit, which can at all approve itself to one versed in Scripture language, is that which would explain it of

persons rather than of *doctrines*; the flock which was given him, the souls committed to his charge: according to the use of the word in the Acts of the Apostles: "They *commended* their new converts to the Lord on Whom they had believed;" and St. Paul "*commended* the Ephesian elders to God and the word of His grace."

But, besides the reasons above given for interpreting the place rather of doctrine, it may be asked whether the very form of expression, Keep the deposit, is such as would have been probably adopted, had pastoral duties been only or chiefly intended. It seems to cast upon the person so admonished rather too much of absolute responsibility, considering that, after all, the success of the pastoral care must depend chiefly on those who are the objects of it. In short, it is a mode of interpreting too much in unison with the overstrained exaggerated demands of our day; in which it has become a general custom to speak as if every thing depended on the personal qualities of the clergy; to blame them altogether for failure, and, in consequence, to attribute to them over much of the blessing, with which the Almighty from time to time may be pleased to visit His Church.

NOTE D, p. 191.

Iren. adv. Hær. iii. 4. "Non oportet adhuc quærere apud alios veritatem, quam facile est ab Ecclesia sumere; cum Apostoli, quasi in depositorium dives, plenissime in eam contulerint omnia quæ sint veritatis: uti omnis, quicumque velit, sumat ex ea potum vitæ. Hæc est enim vitæ introitus; omnes autem reliqui fures sunt et latrones Quid autem si neque Apostoli quidem Scripturas reliquissent nobis? Nonne oportebat ordinem sequi traditionis quam tradiderunt iis quibus committebant Ecclesias? Cui

ordinationi assentiunt multæ gentes Barbarorum, eorum qui in Christum credunt, sine charta vel atramento scriptam habentes per Spiritum in cordibus suis salutem, et veterem traditionem diligenter custodientes. . . . Hanc fidem qui sine literis crediderunt, quantum ad sermonem nostrum, barbari sunt; quantum autem ad sententiam, et consuetudinem, et conversationem, propter fidem perquam sapientissimi sunt, et placent Deo, conversantes in omni justitia et castitate et sapientia. Quibus si aliquis annuntiaverit ea quæ ab hæreticis adinventæ sunt, proprio sermone eorum colloquens, statim concludentes aures, longo longius fugient, ne audire quidem sustinentes blasphemum colloquium.”

NOTE E, p. 196.

This is not said without recollection of such texts as St. John v. 49; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. But it is plain that both these passages speak of the *Scriptures of the Old Testament only*; and therefore, if understood exclusively, prove too much. The latter, indeed, adds a general remark on the use of *all* Scripture; that being, as it is, all alike divinely inspired, every part of it has its use, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; and must help to the perfection and entire furnishing of the man of God unto all good works. But St. Paul does not there affirm that all truths necessary to salvation are contained in Scripture, any more than he affirms all to be contained in each separate portion of Scripture.

These being the passages commonly adduced to prove by Scripture the sufficiency of Scripture, and being evidently inadequate to the purpose, we cannot be very wrong in rather referring to Tradition, as for the Sacred Canon

itself, so also for this rule concerning it; That it contains or implies whatever points of faith are necessary to eternal salvation.

NOTE F, p. 198.

Not to travel at present beyond the writings of Irenæus himself, the following might be cited as passages clearly implying this doctrine. In b. ii. c. 46. he thus lays down the rule to be adopted in interpreting Scripture parables:—“A sound, and safe, and religious mind, and one really bent on truth:—whatsoever things God has left within our province, and subjected to our knowledge, those such a mind will diligently study to the uttermost, and in the same continually advance, by daily exercise rendering the acquisition of knowledge easy to itself. Now these things are, first, such as come under the cognizance of our sight; secondly, whatsoever things are openly and unambiguously uttered in the very words of the Divine Scriptures. And therefore the parables, or dark passages, ought always to be expounded consistently with those which are clear.” Is it not plain that Irenæus is here dividing the grounds of human knowledge into two classes, the one of Sight and the other of Faith; and that his definition of the latter is, “such things as are openly and unambiguously uttered in the very words of Divine Scripture?” Presently after, he compares those who leave express Scripture for doubtful and fanciful theories of figurative language, to the foolish virgins, who “being freely and in plain terms invited to meet the bridegroom, lose their opportunity, and are shut out of the marriage feast, while they are seeking light from those who busy themselves in the dark with forced explanations of parables.” Again, in the very passage above quoted, p. 191, where he speaks most highly of real aposto-

lical tradition, he clearly intimates that the Scriptures are parallel to it in substance. The mere question, If we had not the Scriptures, must we not follow tradition? implies, that having the Scriptures, we have the substance of truths necessary to salvation, and so far depend not at all on tradition. The manner, again, in which Irenæus every where opposes the heretics to the Scriptures, evinces that they were constantly and unhesitatingly appealed to by the orthodox, as the foundation, without going further. E. g. lib. ii. c. 54. "These are not fitter guides than the Scriptures: nor does it become us, leaving the writings of the Lord and Moses, and the other prophets, heralds of the truth, to rest our faith on these, whose teaching has nothing sound, but is full of distraction and incoherency."

NOTE G, p. 202.

The following is the statement of St. Athanasius; de Decr. Nic. Synod. c. iii. t. i. 210. ed. Bened.

Ὡς ἐφιλονείκουν ἀσεβοῦντες, καὶ θεομαχεῖν ἐπεχείρουν, τὰ μὲν λεγόμενα παρ' αὐτῶν ἀσεβείας ἦν μεστὰ· οἱ δὲ συνελθόντες ἐπίσκοποι· ἦσαν δὲ πλέον ἢ ἔλασσον τριακόσιοι· πράως καὶ φιλανθρώπως ἀπήτουν αὐτούς, περὶ ὧν ἔλεγον διδόναι λόγον καὶ ἀποδείξεις εὐσεβεῖς· ὡς δὲ καὶ μόνον φθεγγόμενοι κατεγινώσκοντο, καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς διεμάχοντο, πολλὴν ὀργῶντες τῆς ἑαυτῶν αἰρέσεως τὴν ἀπορίαν, ἀχανεῖς μὲν ἔμενον οὗτοι, καὶ διὰ τῆς σιωπῆς ὁμολογοῦν τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ κακοδοξίᾳ αὐτῶν αἰσχύνην· οἱ τοίνυν ἐπίσκοποι λοιπὸν ἀνελόντες τὰ παρ' αὐτῶν ἐπινοηθέντα ῥήματα, οὕτως ἐξέθεντο κατ' αὐτῶν τὴν ὑγιαίνουσαν καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικὴν πίστιν.

"The Arians being forward in their impiety, and taking the offensive, and uttering words full of ungodliness, the Bishops who had assembled, being in number three hundred, more or less, quietly asked of them to give some explanation and proof of their affirmations, consistent with

piety. But when upon their own shewing they were convicted, and were at variance with each other, finding themselves much at a loss in maintaining their heresy, the result was, on the one part, silence, and an implied confession of shame for their perverse opinion; on the other, the Bishops rejected the expressions devised by them, and proceeded to enunciate against them the sound faith, *the faith of the Church from the beginning.*”

The orthodox therefore at Nice argued indeed largely from Scripture, but it was in refutation of the Arian subtilities, rather than for establishment of the Catholic faith. For the latter purpose, they were content to appeal to tradition.

NOTE H, p. 206.

Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, c. vi. p. i. s. 56.
 “The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants. Whatever else they believe besides it, and the plain irrefragable indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion: but as matter of faith and religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds believe in themselves, nor require the belief of it in others, without most high and most schismatical presumption. I for my part, after a long and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly, that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but upon this rock only. I see plainly, and with mine own eyes, that there are Popes against Popes, *Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, the same Fathers against themselves, a consent of Fathers of one age against a consent of Fathers of another age, the Church of one age against the Church of another age; traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended, but there are few or none to be found. No tradition*

but only of Scripture can derive itself from the fountain, but may be plainly proved either to have been brought in in such an age after Christ, or that in such an age it was not in. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty but of Scripture only for any considering man to build upon." It is melancholy, but instructive, to reflect, that the writer of these sentences is known to have been for a long time "sceptical, to say the least of it, on the highest points of faith." Clarendon's Life, i. 56. See Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works, i. 66, 67; Des Maizeaux, Life of Chillingworth, 55.

NOTE I, p. 214.

The sort of improvement which we are encouraged to hope for, is traced out by Vincentius Lirinensis, Commonitor. c. 22.—"O Timothee, O sacerdos, O tractator, O doctor, si te divinum munus idoneum fecerit, ingenio, exercitatione, doctrina, esto spiritalis tabernaculi Bezaleel, pretiosas divini dogmatis gemmas exsculpe, fideliter coapta, adorna sapienter, adjice splendorem, gratiam, venustatem. Intelligatur te exponente illustrius quod ante obscurius credebatur. Per te posteritas intellectum gratuletur, quod ante vetustas non intellectum venerabatur. Eadem tamen quæ didicisti doce; ut cum dicas nove, non dicas nova." Compare Bp. Butler, Anal. part ii. c. iii. vol. ii. p. 249. Oxford, 1807.

NOTE K, p. 217.

This part of the argument can hardly be stated, under the present circumstances of our Church, without giving rise to the grave practical question, What is the line to be taken by those clergymen, who feel serious objections, in

conscience and principle, to the course of ecclesiastical legislation now in progress: who consider our Saviour's charter to be violated by the admission of a body constituted as the British Parliament now is to legislate for the Church of Christ, especially without control or authority from the Bishops synodically assembled? Under such persuasion, can we help regarding the laws so passed, or hereafter to be passed, as having in themselves no canonical force, and only then claiming the submission of Christ's ministers and people, when enforced on us severally by command of our respective diocesans? Or can we avoid entertaining fears, that the whole may amount in God's sight to the concurrence of the Church in a great national sin? All this, over and above the many grave exceptions which, as not a few of us think, may reasonably be alleged against the *details* of the proposed reform. Can it be wrong to take such opportunities as we have of respectfully recording our humble but deliberate protest against proceedings, in our judgment so very objectionable?

The present writer is well aware of the insignificancy of such expressions of individual opinion; and also of the danger of appearing undutiful to those whom he is bound most on earth to honour and revere. But he has observed in several quarters a disposition to interpret the silence of the parochial clergy as implying approbation of the measures in question: and he fears that such supposed acquiescence may tend to neutralize our efforts on future occasions. These feelings, he hopes, may plead his excuse for being anxious to disavow on his own behalf, and as far as he may venture to do so, on behalf of the clergy in general, all responsibility on the subject. The principles, on which we might well be supposed averse to the course which has been adopted, were sufficiently manifested three

years ago in the remonstrances against the Irish Church Bill. Whatever has been now done, for good or for evil, the praise or blame of it must belong entirely to our governors. Our part has been merely that of soldiers, laying down their arms at the command of their superior officers. Nor can it in fairness be so construed as to preclude us hereafter from asserting Church principles, as often as we feel that our duty calls on us to do so^a.

^a For the Postscript annexed to former editions, see the end of the Volume.

SERMON IX.*

CHURCH SOCIETIES.

NUMBERS xxiii. 23.

*According to this time it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel,
What hath God wrought?*

THESE words are part of Balaam's involuntary blessing, pronounced on God's people when he had intended to curse them. They appear to contain a distinct intimation of that which must strike all considerate persons on reading this portion of the sacred history: namely, that it exhibits, in a condensed and what may be almost called a symbolical form, the general course and final issue of the warfare, which is ever going on between the Church and the world: which warfare is the great subject of prophecy, both in the Old and in the New Testament.

* Preached at Winchester, May 31, 1838, at the annual meeting of the District Committees of the Societies for Propagating the Gospel, and Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Thus, the alarm and perplexity of Balak, when he first heard of the coming of the Israelites, vividly represents the feelings of the mere statesmen, the soldiers, conquerors, and other rulers of this world, when they find themselves compelled to deal with the Church of God. His sending for Balaam may be compared to the continual efforts they distinctively make to enlist human learning and science, popular prejudice and false religious feeling, on their side, and against this new power, so strange in itself, and existing to them so unaccountably; which they would gladly evade, but find themselves compelled to meet. Balaam's reluctant refusal at first, and his unwilling testimony afterwards, in favour of those whom he was invited, and wished, to curse, are no inapt emblem of struggling human reason, forced on its own principles to offer assent and profess allegiance to the Cross of our Lord and Saviour. And too easily, must we own likewise, may a parallel be found for the success of the false prophet in tempting God's people to fornication, and thence to idolatry, by those who consider how a base secular policy is ever combining with a baser earthly philosophy, to lower the standard both of morals and of doctrine within the holy city, which they vainly assail from without.

Other points of analogy, and very striking ones, will occur of themselves to a diligent reader. And surely this whole train of thought acquires an additional and a very awful importance, when we

consider what the text, as I just now mentioned, seems to affirm: that the entire transaction was intentionally over-ruled from on high, so as that it should prove a kind of sample or specimen of the proceedings of the Almighty, of His Church, and of His enemies, from that time to the world's end. "According to this time it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, What hath God wrought?" As if he should say, "This signal interposition of the Lord to deliver His people will be a type or pattern of His watchful Providence over them, from time to time calling forth the fear and admiration even of those who would least wish to acknowledge it." The literal Israel first, and afterwards the spiritual, was to be the Lord's chosen field; the medium (if so it may be called) in which it would please Him to display His glorious and gracious attributes, not to men only, but to the powers in the heavenly places: and that "according to the time" of Balaam and Balak,—in a manner analogous to what was then taking place. To that time in particular we are authorized to look, for instruction in the privileges, the dangers, and the duties, of the Church at all times.

It cannot therefore be out of season shortly to direct attention that way on such occasions as the present. For the two Societies, whose joint claim we are this day to consider, are not to be regarded as merely charitable voluntary associations, standing each on its own merits, independent of all

other institutions: like the body of subscribers to a hospital, or a charity school. They are forms and modes of action which the Church in England has adopted: supported, as they are, and regulated, as they profess to be, by the whole body of our Prelates, they are, *pro tanto*, that Church. So far, her privileges, dangers, and duties are theirs: and the word spoken of old for her warning and encouragement may be applied in some measure to them.

With this application in view, let us consider, first, the particular privilege of the Church, to which more especially the context would direct our thoughts. "God brought him out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." In other words, The Church redeemed out of the world, and endowed with the power of the Cross which redeemed it, and to which it is made conformable, is thereby secured against all evil spirits. "Endowed," I say, "with the power of the Cross:" for to the Cross unquestionably there is an allusion, when the horns of the unicorn are spoken of as the instrument of God's power. There can be no doubt of this interpretation, if the meaning of a prophetic symbol may be decided by the consenting judgment of antiquity. Observe now against what evil the strength of the unicorn, that is, the power of the Cross, is here repeated as a safeguard. "There is no *enchantment* against Jacob, neither is there any *divination* against Israel."

Whatever in former or in later times may have been meant by enchantment or divination : whether the availing ourselves of power, actually permitted for a while, under certain limits, to evil spirits ; or communion, fancied or pretended, with such spirits ; or the sort of insight into the mysteries whether of nature or of man, and consequent command over both, which to ordinary men wears most the appearance of magic ;—we are here assured, that none of these forces shall ever prevail against the Church of God.

The sign of the Cross was of old time a weapon for Christians against unknown dangers : the doctrine of the Cross, their instrument of triumph against Pagan philosophy from Celsus to Julian : and so it continues to this day. I mean, the Cross of Christ so believed in, as that we should in our measure bear it and conform ourselves to it. That is the Cross to which the promises are made. The children of Israel covered the face of the earth ; yet they lay still, and moved not against the Moabites. They had but to continue faithful, and the curse was changed into a blessing. The Christians in Julian's day were in a manner the universal Roman empire, but they patiently endured both the insolent sophistry and the harassing edicts of the emperor, and God interfered in His own time to deliver them.

By His great and distinguishing mercy, the same Church which was then preserved through patience continues among us to this day. We are inheritors

of the same promises; and let us take it as one token of our privilege, that we inherit the same opposition and hostility. Our age seems to answer to that of Julian in this very characteristic circumstance, that in it Balaam and Balak are as it were combined in one. Over the greater part of the civilized Christian world Science and Philosophy falsely so called—the “enchantment” and “divination” of a literary and refined age—have acquired of late to a great extent, and are daily, as it seems, acquiring, secular power. It is this combination which forms the spirit of our age;—a spirit which would fain curse the kingdom and people of God: but we see daily the effect of His Providence turning the curse into a blessing, in that even this evil spirit is forced to affect a Christian tone, in words at least to praise the Gospel, and predict its universal triumph.

Here then we are led on from the consideration of the Church's privilege to that of her peculiar accompanying danger. Balaam's cursing could not hurt Israel: but the seduction which he contrived took effect, we know how fatally. May not something like this be apprehended with regard to the people of God in their present trial? The power and the wisdom of this world may each in their way war against Christianity, but the only mean for them really to hurt the Church is their prevailing on her (which God forbid!) to take them into her councils; to stain her discipline with the

world's policy, and lower her doctrine to the world's standard of credibility.

I will give an example or two under each head. Should any portion of the Catholic Church have virtually surrendered, for popularity or state support, the power which our Lord gave to His Apostles and their successors only for the remission and retention of sins; I should call this a compromise in respect of discipline which could not be too deeply repented of, tending as it does to forfeit the Redeemer's blessing. Should another portion, no less virtually and truly, have adopted the principle of sanctioning political evil that theological good may come—disturbing nations and dethroning sovereigns with a view to the supposed unity and influence of the Church,—what unperverted conscience can fail to see the offence and fear the consequence? This latter case is or has been that of the Church of Rome in particular: the former, I fear, is that of all established Churches under heaven, and of some not established; but the Romish offence is evidently the more grievous of the two, by how much activity in treason is worse than unwilling acquiescence in other men's profaneness.

Again, to exemplify under the head of doctrine; wherever what is called Rationalism holds sway:—that is, wherever it is assumed that all important points in religion may be accounted for on principles within reach of human reason:—there it may be truly said, that an earthly

philosophy prevails against the true faith, not in a way of direct opposition, but by dexterously insinuating itself into the very substance of men's belief. And where that particular line of speculation is patronised by the civil power, it is exactly Balaam teaching Balak to put a stumbling-block before the children of Israel.

From this brief account of the privileges and dangers, it will not be hard to collect also the peculiar duties of the Church at the present moment. Her duty surely is, to defy the enmity against which she is secured by an unfailing promise, but greatly to fear the world's insinuating friendship, the treacherous compromises into which either policy or philosophy is continually endeavouring to beguile her. The Israelites had nothing to do but to abide in their tents by their tribes, and they were safe from open warfare and avowed cursing. But they were called on to arouse themselves, and make active resistance, when the emissaries of idolatry and sensuality came actually within their camp. And the mischief was not abated but by a terrible atonement, tasking to the very utmost the zeal of Phinehas, and of the rest who continued faithful. Who shall warrant us of the Church in England against being brought in no long time to some such severe and fiery trial, as the only alternative to open apostasy and irreligion? except it shall please God to open our eyes, more generally than as yet they are opened,

to the extreme peril we are in, of sacrificing apostolical prerogative to political expediency, and apostolical truth to rationalistic ingenuity.

For so it is, (and the present occasion especially calls on us to remark it,) that the Body of Christ in these later ages (at least in those members with which we are most concerned) has been gradually growing imperfect and languid in her discharge of both the duties now specified. She has not shewn her ancient bold front to the civil power, when profane or encroaching: she has not kept her old jealous watch against utilitarian breaches of order, or philosophical perversions of truth, within her precincts. The former of these errors is the natural abuse of that which is in itself a plain duty, and a great blessing; the government acknowledging the Church, and cooperating with it: called in common language the establishment of the Church, and its union with the State. In itself, I say, this is a duty, and brings a blessing; but it becomes a snare and a curse, when for its sake we are tempted to sacrifice any part of primitive truth and order: and how far this has been and is our position in this country especially, let considerate persons judge.

The other ill effect just mentioned—the more or less unconscious lowering or distortion of doctrines, to make them prove more useful, or appear more refined and enlightened—is the natural result of what is called high civilization. The

more we know of the material world, the less willing are we to believe and value things which take us entirely beyond its range: the more we communicate with and depend on others, the more anxious do we become to find out the use of every thing, as becoming more aware of the general unwillingness to be guided by any other consideration. Thus the distinctions on which this generation prides itself are just such as would lead a thoughtful person to expect a rank growth of heresy and schism in the Church: and she being bound and pressed down by her connection with states so constituted as quickly to receive all these evil impressions, it becomes her faithful children to seek out subsidiary modes, if any can be found, of enabling her in some sort to discharge her two great duties, of denying the world's hostility, and purging herself of its infection.

It is perhaps in this point of view that Societies, such as we now meet to support, may best be regarded, if we are desirous of recommending and maintaining them on true Church principles. Were the Catholic Church in a sound and united state, able to discharge all her duties, such combinations would be unnecessary; and being unnecessary, they would be hurtful, as dividing and dispersing those energies, to which she has the sole and entire right. For the idea of the Catholic Church is all that in one, which we imperfectly endeavour to shape out by our innumerable and partial, and

therefore most unsatisfactory, combinations. The Church, as has been remarked before now, is a Society for promoting Christian Knowledge; for propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts; for building Churches; for providing Curates; for educating the Poor; and for whatever other purposes would conduce to the being of God's Kingdom where as yet it is not, and its well-being where it is. She has her Eucharistical Sacrifice of alms, to provide the funds for all these, and all other holy and bountiful purposes; she has her Bishops to be stewards, responsible receivers, of those funds, and her Deacons to assist in the labour of keeping and disbursing them. She is present at once in all nations, keeping up among all her members that full unreserved communication, which may best enable her to distribute her treasures, so that the abundance of one portion shall be a supply for the want of another. Finally, and above all, she is a society divinely instituted for these very purposes: whereas these our modern charities, however good and useful, are but inventions of men.

Nor am I merely speaking here of the theory or idea of the Church, as of some Utopian or Platonic commonwealth. Those who know any thing of Christian antiquity, know that for many hundred years it actually corresponded to this description. And that no doubt is the reason why, although we read much in early ecclesiastical history of

hospitals, almshouses, and other such institutions, founded for purposes of temporal charity, we nowhere meet with any thing corresponding to what are called the religious Societies of the present day. As we draw towards the middle ages, when the Church had begun to decline both in unity, in independence, and in orthodoxy, we find certain monastic orders having purposes of this kind. But not till then : not until the Church as a body felt herself cramped, and unequal to her former efforts.

Thus it becomes evident, (and the remark, I trust, is not inconsistent with unfeigned respect and cordial gratitude towards Societies such as the present,) that however useful and valuable they are, their existence and flourishing estate cannot in itself be reckoned a token of general growth and prosperity in God's Kingdom. It argues not a sound habit of body, but rather a strong effort of a diseased constitution to right itself. While, therefore, we heartily rejoice in the comparative success and usefulness of such institutions, it becomes us notwithstanding to feel humbled and anxious, in the consciousness that after all their very existence is a symptom and a confession of fearful decay. We trust that in encouraging and supporting them, we are on the whole "doing right in the sight of the Lord;" yet they remind us painfully, at every turn, that "the high places are not taken away." They may be

well enough for the second Temple, but it is fit that they should be accompanied with remorseful remembrances of the first.

This view may be confirmed and illustrated by reverting to the historical origin of the two Societies. The elder of the two is the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the records of which are a remarkable instance of the great visible effect with which God's Providence is sometimes pleased to crown the pious zeal of a few individuals. It began in the last year of the seventeenth century, at a meeting at which it appears that only five persons, four of them laymen, were present. The preamble to their first minute of proceedings states, as the immediate occasion of their combining, the deep sense they had of the growth of vice and immorality. The English Church, it is not now needful to enquire why, had lost, and was then losing more entirely than ever, the "godly discipline" wherewith Christ had at first endowed her; and this Society was an effort of her instinctive energies to mitigate in some sort that irreparable defect.

Again, as things then were, her connection with the State, with whatever advantages attended, brought along with it undoubtedly this evil: that it greatly restrained her power as a Missionary Church. She was prevented from sending out Bishops, that is, from propagating Christ's Gospel and Kingdom in the only primitive way, even within the unconverted portion

of His Majesty's own dominions. Hence the need of such a Society as that for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: which issued at length in the present American Church: but not until the worldly and short-sighted policy of refusing all State encouragement to the Church in the Colonies had met its reward in the separation from the mother country: a change, which in all probability would have been obviated, had true Church principles been allowed to develop themselves in that land. As it was, however pressing the need, the Church had not power in England, as a Church, to take any signal step, either for the promotion of Christian Knowledge with a view to the reformation of manners at home, or for the propagation of the Gospel abroad. It was necessary for her members, as individuals, to exert themselves, and form a party, if so it must be called, for those great purposes: which, had she been free and erect, she might, under God's blessing, have achieved by her own moving force applied to her own machinery.

Thus much to explain the assertion, that voluntary Societies such as these, however worthy of support under present circumstances, are nevertheless an indication of an unhealthy state of the Church. Their very existence too surely betrays constraint from without, or disorder within, or both.

Yet this view of their origin and operations need

not at all cause a considerate person to hesitate as to the duty of supporting them. Poor substitutes undoubtedly they are for the victorious self-purifying energies with which the Kingdom of Heaven was endowed when the last of the Apostles left it, but of all institutions within our reach as individuals, they answer most nearly to the character of the Church's organs: first, historically, because it is a known fact, that they have been generally supported from the beginning by the Prelates of our Church: and secondly and chiefly, on principle, because their peculiar rule and law is, to propagate the Gospel, and promote Christian knowledge, not in any way which to human eyes may seem expedient, but strictly in the way which our Lord Himself ordained: joining always the Church with the Scriptures, the means of grace with the doctrines of grace. From which it would seem to follow, that over and above their positive good effects, it is good and right in itself for individual Christians to join themselves to them, and zealously forward their exertions. Each of us would perhaps do well to consider himself as being by such adherence pledged anew to the great Church principles, the assertion of which these Societies undertook in degenerate and forgetful times. By supporting the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, we virtually acknowledge that the Kingdom of Christ, the visible Apostolical Church, is independent of the kingdoms of this world:

that it is her duty and commission to go on, conquering and to conquer, with or without the co-operation of the civil power. The other Association binds us no less to uphold what one may perhaps venture to call the right of the Church to purify and correct herself—the censorial prerogative which Christ has conveyed to her rulers over the education and the studies of all her members, and especially over those of the young and of the poor. In submitting to the Bishops all our plans for the promotion of Christian Knowledge, we take the divinely appointed way of securing our camp against the seduction of false prophecy. And in propagating the Gospel always along with the Church, and exclusively under the Bishops and in communion with them, we do in effect claim for the Church an inherent independence of the secular power, and a right to disregard that power, should it prove hostile. By the one we defy Balak: by the other we stand on our guard against Balaam. Thus the two cautions which their page of sacred history presents, are virtually recognised; and men, if they would be consistent, would feel that they were pledged to the further support of the same high principles, as soon as ever their spiritual governors shall call on them for such support.

It may be worth considering, whether this view do not imply, that our support of the Societies in question should be *exclusive*. If we rightly regard them as the organs of the Church, however unwill-

lingly adopted by her at first in a time of extreme necessity, when her natural functions seemed in a manner paralyzed; it would seem that the unity which the Church covets in all things ought also to be found here; and therefore that coordinate institutions for the same purposes, however noble in design and successful in result, cannot be quite consistent with primitive Christian order.

Should this view be correct, it can hardly be necessary to add, that it becomes us to shew our earnestness in it by so much the more liberal contributions, on occasions like the present, when our alms assume more than usual of the character of Church oblations. If we find ourselves conscientiously precluded from giving our aid to other well-meant institutions, it may be well for us to prove our sincerity by increased bounty to those, in regard of which no such scruple exists: and more especially at the present moment to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, whose call is rendered more urgent than ever by the situation of the Canadian provinces, in consequence of the denial of the usual Parliamentary grant.

But whatever may be thought of *exclusiveness*, it is quite clear, that the original principles of the two Societies being continually kept in view, would tend more than any thing else to rectify their movements in detail, wheresoever the spirit of our time is most likely to pervert and mislead them. Thus, should either of them betray an inclination

to measure God's favour by visible results; and, with a view to greater effect, to admit on its list all persons who will give their money, and all sorts of well-meaning books, which are at all likely to find general acceptance:—might it not be seasonable to remind one another, that one of the original fundamental rules of the Christian Knowledge Society was to admit no man, to receive no man's subscription, without testimony given of his sober and religious life? Thus a kind of discipline was kept up, in which, as in some other respects, these venerable Societies were no unmeet representatives of the Church Catholic in this realm. If this rule has been allowed to pass away, and if in other respects there be reason to fear a lowering of their standard to ensure present support, then it is the more necessary that we should remember the special promise and special danger of God's people. Against them no "enchantment" or "divination" shall ever prevail from without; but they may and will be most fearfully visited for every instance of internal accommodation to the spirit of their enemy, the world.

In a word: when we take ways of our own to do good, we may seem to make great progress, but we cannot be sure that our prosperity is a blessing. But when we scrupulously adhere to God's way, both His present favour and our final success are certain, let the immediate effect be what it may. For this is that course of spiritual husbandry which has the

promise of the Lord of the whole earth: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should grow and spring up, he knoweth not how." Therefore, as St. James adds, "Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

S E R M O N X.^a

EUCCHARISTICAL OFFICES.

ST. JOHN xvii. 19.

For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified through the Truth.

WHEN we seriously consider this solemn address of our Lord, with all the circumstances under which it was delivered, we cannot well doubt of its bearing especial reference to the Holy Communion, which He had just then instituted. It comes before us as a solemn service from the mouth of the Great High Priest: a prayer of invocation and intercession: a verbal oblation, accompanying and ratifying the actual oblation of His sacred Body and Blood.

In this connexion it is presented to us, first of all, by the very time and place of its delivery. The place, that upper room, whither our Lord had so emphatically summoned His disciples, as being the chosen spot, where all the prophecies and types especially concerning Sion should receive their accomplishment, in the last Passover, the first Eucharist, and the descent of the Holy Spirit to

^a This Sermon, in substance, was prepared for a Church in Scotland, the Sunday on which the Communion Office was introduced there.

set up the Kingdom of Heaven. This was the place of that awful Prayer: as appears plainly where we are told, that "after He had spoken these words," and not before, "He went out with His disciples over the brook Cedron," into the garden, the appointed scene of His agony.

Then as to the time and order, in which the Prayer stands among the events of that night, there can be no question among harmonists. It followed immediately upon the farewell promise of the Comforter, as that promise had followed on the institution of the Sacrament of the Cup. Our Lord had risen from the Table where they were all sitting at meat, and where a few minutes before He had ordained the Sacrament of His Body: He had risen to leave the room, and in rising, had turned the parting Cup which was distributed as usual on such occasions into the Sacrament of His Blood: and then He had gone on to tell them of the True Vine, of their portion in It, of the severe trial and persecution inseparable from that privilege, and of His intercession and the presence of the Comforter, as their unfailing aid and consolation. And having said this, He "lift up His eyes to Heaven," (still continuing in the same place and posture, standing with them round the Table on which He had ordained the Holy Eucharist,) and commended them, with all who should believe on Him through their word, to His Father, in that heavenly and mysterious Prayer, of which the text is part. And then without delay He goes out,

and submits Himself to His agony, and afterwards to His death. Who but must feel, concerning this His last public prayer, that as it clearly sets forth some of the great purposes of the bloody offering of Himself which He was about to make, so it could not be without signification, as regards the unbloody Sacrifice, the perpetual memory of His precious death, which He had been just ordaining to all generations? Who that knows at all what it is to pray just after Communion, can doubt that the prayer of Christ, made presently after that first Communion, must teach us something of the virtue of the same, and of His special purposes in appointing it?

Accordingly we find, that certain high and sacred words, words which may be said to give, as it were, the key note to the Eucharistical Services of the Church, are also the dominant words in our Lord's Intercession. Observe especially the word "sanctify," as He here employs it more than once. "Sanctify them" whom Thou hast given Me "by Thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world: and for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in the Truth." The passage corresponds in a remarkable way with our Lord's affirmation to the Jews, a few months before. "Say ye of Him, Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said,

I am the Son of God?" "Sanctified" and "sent:"—the two words are connected together in both passages: only in His reproof to the unbelievers our Lord speaks of Himself alone, in this His farewell intercession He extends the sanctification and mission, through His Apostles, to all faithful men. In both the allusion evidently is to the great Council of God in His Son's Incarnation. "A Body hast Thou prepared Me: . . . then said I, Lo, I come to do Thy Will, O God:"—now observe how the Apostle follows up the train of thought: "By the which Will," he says, "we are *sanctified*, through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all^a."

In short, the term is ecclesiastical and liturgical, implying special and solemn devotion to the service of God. Thus it is used concerning precious materials: "The Temple *sanctifieth* the gold, the Altar the gift." "The creatures of God are good, being *sanctified* by the Word of God, and by Prayer."

In this last verse, as in several others, the process of sanctification is ascribed to the Word of God, effectually and solemnly pronounced for that purpose: one might perhaps correctly say, to His sacramental Word. So in reference to Holy Baptism, we read, "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might *sanctify* and cleanse it with the washing of water *by the Word*: that He might present" (or "offer") "it to Himself a

^a S. John x. 36; Psalm xl. 6—8; Heb. x. 5—10.

glorious Church." And in a passage which is with much reason apprehended to allude to the liturgical office of that time, St. Paul speaks of "the grace given him of God, that he should be a sacrificial minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, doing the priest's work in respect of the Gospel of God: that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being *sanctified* by the Holy Ghost^b."

Further, and still more decisively, Sanctification is the word constantly employed in the Old Testament, in the Pentateuch and Ezekiel, and where-soever the Mosaic Ritual is set forth, to denote solemn consecration and devotion to God's service, whether of persons or of things. Thus it is applied to the sabbath day, to the first-born, to the persons of the priests, to their apparel, to the tabernacle, to the altar and other sacred furniture, to the whole people of Israel as distinguished from other nations, to the sabbatical year, to the censers of Korah and his company^c: and in every one of these instances, I believe, there is an outward dedication, or something equivalent to it.

Doubtless the whole was moral and symbolical, but of what? Not simply, I suppose, of the inward vital change of heart wrought by the Holy Ghost in each Christian who does not reject it, (which is what we especially associate with the term Sancti-

^b S. Matt. xxiii. 17—19; 1 Tim. iv. 5; Eph. v. 26; Rom. xv. 16.

^c Gen. ii. 3; Exod. xiii. 2; xxix. 1, 27, 44, 37; xxxi. 12; Lev. xxv. 10; Num. xvi. 37.

fication,) not simply of this, though it be most real, and blessed, and necessary : but Sanctification, in its ordinary scriptural meaning, seems primarily to refer to the solemn act of God the Son, setting Himself apart to do God's will in His Incarnation and Death, and in the whole economy of salvation. Sanctification, like Righteousness, is the property of Christ our Head : to us His members, and to all created things, so far as it pleases Him to use them in His great work, it is vouchsafed most truly in our several measures, but in a secondary and derivative sense : each depending on that first Sanctification of His, and each in its degree representing and applying It.

Consider again, in this point of view, the use of the word Truth in our Lord's farewell intercession. " Sanctify them through Thy Truth : Thy Word is Truth. . . . For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in the Truth." He seems to say, that whereas all past sanctification, all that they read of in the Old Testament, or saw practised in their authorized ritual, was but shadowy, ceremonial, and typical, now the very Truth is come,—the Word of God, Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life,—the substance which had cast all these shadows before it. He is come, having by the act of His Incarnation sanctified and devoted Himself, and with Himself all those who are to be made members of Him : all whom He should consecrate in the waters of Baptism,

and send forth on their several errands into the world, as His Father had sent Him into the world: "for all these," our Lord seems to say, "I am even now sanctifying Myself, I am repeating and rehearsing in their sight the solemn act by which I devoted myself to do My Father's will in redeeming mankind. I offer Myself anew in the Sacrament of My Body and Blood, which I have just instituted, that they, partaking of Me therein, may be also solemnly dedicated, sanctified, and offered, not in rite and shadow, but in deed and in truth."

This construction of our Lord's Prayer, which represents it as continuing, confirming, and applying the benediction just before pronounced on His holy Feast, seems further countenanced by comparison of it with ancient Liturgies, and with our own. If our Lord begins, lifting up His eyes to Heaven, "Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee:" we know that every where from the beginning the more solemn portion of the Eucharistical office has commenced with the invitation, "Lift up your hearts:" and has proceeded to give glory to the Father especially. If our Lord in this one place salutes Him Who sent Him as "Holy Father:" so does the Church in this one Hymn: "It is very meet . . . that we should at all times . . . give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father." If He plead, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do:" she rehearses in all her Liturgies, more or less

at large, in form of exhortation, of scriptural sentences, or of thanksgiving, the process of that great work. If He say in so many words, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world:" we know that our Eucharistical intercessions, properly so called, are confined to "the whole state of Christ's Church:" neither were the names of aliens mentioned, nor their offerings accepted, in the ancient services. If He pray especially for the Apostles first, and then for those who should believe on Him through their word: the common order of the Church has been to give her governors the precedence among those whom she enumerates in her intercessory prayer. If one great object of our Lord's intercession is the visible unity of all believers in Him, and through Him with the Father;—such unity as the world might see, and believe that God had sent Him;—we in our oblation prayer beseech God before all things "to inspire continually the Universal Church with the Spirit of truth, unity, and concord; that all who profess His holy Name may agree in the truth of His holy Word, and live in unity and godly love." If our Lord goes on from outward unity to speak of that depth of inconceivable blessing, "That they may be with Me where I am;—that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me:—that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them:"—the petition that we make on our knees just before consecration is, "That

we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us." Lastly, as "when Jesus had spoken these words, He" delayed not, but "went over the brook Cedron," to the place where He had appointed to suffer: so we are instructed, immediately on receiving That which is the accomplishment of those words, to lose no time in offering "ourselves, our souls and bodies," a living sacrifice to Him, to do, and endure, whatever He has prepared for us.

If now, by considerations such as these, we are satisfied that our Lord's farewell prayer was indeed an Eucharistical prayer, and corresponds with our Eucharistical services: surely no man who loves Him can think of this as of a beautiful circumstance merely, a warrant for a certain imaginative joy and delight, permitted us in addition to the other innumerable blessings of that holiest service. Truly such it is, and a great deal more than such, in regard both of doctrine and of consolation.

And first, for doctrine. Have we not indeed, in the words of the text alone, the substance of the Eucharistical office, in both its parts—both in its sacrificial and in its sacramental character? "I sanctify Myself:" there is the Sacrifice: "that they also may be sanctified through the Truth:" there is the Sacrament. Are not these plainly the guiding, the prevailing thoughts, which He, our Great Teacher and Exemplar, would have us associate with the services of His sacred Altar?

For thus it is. After ordaining the Eucharist

for a remembrance or memorial of Himself: having also by solemn prayer commended to His Father His Apostles first, and in them all who should believe on Him through their word, He sums up the effect of what He was doing and saying: "For their sakes I am sanctifying Myself, that they also may be sanctified through the Truth."

Our Blessed Lord then was "sanctifying Himself," that is, setting Himself apart, devoting or offering up Himself, His own Body and Blood, to be the conveyance of like sanctification to us. He was making Himself a sacrifice, that we, being joined to Him, might be holy and lively sacrifices. And all this, "through the Truth:" by participation, namely, of Him, Who is the Very Truth and Reality, the substance of which the old sacrifices were shadows.

I repeat it:—this one saying of Christ conveys apparently in itself the two chief points of the evangelical doctrine concerning the holy and blessed Eucharist: first, that it is His memorial Sacrifice, a mean of obtaining God's favour and pardon for all such as truly repent: next, that it is a most high Sacrament, a mean whereby we are united to Christ, and so made more and more partakers of His righteousness here, and of His glory hereafter.

When we say, "a memorial sacrifice," we mean, that the offering in the Holy Communion does not only put *us* in mind of the great unspeakable things which Christ has done for us, but also that it puts GOD in mind of them: so the Scripture

vouchsafes to speak, over and over putting into our mouth the word, "Remember," when we are being taught to pray^a. So our Lord in the very words of consecration: "This do for the memorial of Me." So the meat or bread offering, mentioned so often in the Old Testament, especially in that manual for sacrifice, the Book of Leviticus, is constantly said to be offered "for a memorial^b:" and without all controversy, it was a type and shadow of that which we Christians present on our altars.

The Eucharist, therefore, is a memorial or commemorative sacrifice: that is, God graciously receives what we break, pour out, and offer, as though His Son presented before Him His very own Body and Blood. He receives it as a continuation of that first awful Eucharist: according to the saying of the Wise man, "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever^c." He "smelleth," as the Bible speaks, "a sweet savour," and is favourable and merciful unto us for the sake of Christ so offering Himself before Him.

In His farewell intercession, accordingly, our Lord pleads His having glorified God on earth,

^a Deut. ix. 27; 2 Kings xx. 3; Nehem. i. 8; v. 19; xiii. 14, 22, 29, 30; Ps. xx. 3; xxv. 6, 7, 8; lxxiv. 2, 19, 23; lxxix. 8; lxxxix. 46, 49; cvi. 4; cxxxii. 1; cxxxvii. 9; Isai. lxiv. 9; Jerem. xviii. 20; Lam. v. 1; S. Luke xxiii. 42.

^b *ἀνάμνησιν*, Lev. xxiv. 7; (cf. Num. x. 10;) *μνημόσυνον*, Lev. ii. 2, 9, 16; v. 12; vi. 15; Num. v. 26; (cf. Exod. xxviii. 12, 29; xxx. 16; xxxix. 7; Num. xxxi. 54.)

^c Eccl. iii. 14.

His "finishing the work," the work of Sacrifice, "which His Father had given Him to do," in order to win from the Father a blessing on those whom He had given Him. As He pleaded then after His first Communion, so His priests are to plead always with their Maker. We do so, when we lay our oblations on His altar, and beseech Him therewith to "receive our prayers:" and more expressly, when we "entirely desire His fatherly goodness to receive our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," that is, our Eucharistical sacrifice, "for ourselves and for all His whole Church." Other Churches in communion with us do so, moreover, in such words as these: "O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of Thy dearly beloved Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, we Thy humble servants do celebrate and make, here before Thy Divine Majesty, with these Thy holy gifts, which we now offer unto Thee, the memorial which Thy Son hath commanded us to make^d."

Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that the Communion duly offered on our altars, is a true memorial sacrifice of our Lord's death. Be sure that where you join in that offering worthily and humbly, with a true penitent heart, at least your sins are so far forgiven, as that you may without fresh sin draw near and receive the Holy Things, and obtain the full blessing of Christ's

^d Scottish Communion Office.

Sacrifice. The merciful God looks down on you from heaven, and sees on you the robe of His Son's righteousness, and so permits you to draw near, that you may eat and live, and not die.

And may we not have good hope, that by virtue of this blessed Sacrifice He graciously overlooks all involuntary defects in the Sacramental Service itself? He accepts our good meaning, according to that we have, and not according to that we have not. Here is consolation for all those, who being more or less aware of the sad differences in Christ's Church, fear lest something more or less important should be wanting in their own Communion. For such, as for their involuntary personal defects, their gracious Master will not fail to receive the Atonement which He Himself hath provided; as in old time He bore with the frailties and errors of His chosen people: as He ordained a daily trespass-offering for the infirmities of the priests: as His servant Hezekiah prayed for those "who seek the Lord God of their fathers, though they be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary^e." May we not hope, that in His sight men "seek the Lord God of their fathers," when they cling to the Creeds of the Church, and to her Communion wheresoever their lot has been cast, whatever blemishes there may be in the details of her service, either in the way of omission or of addition, so long as the great substantial points,

^e 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

Oblation and Participation, are expressly or virtually retained?

Thus much of the Sacrificial Aspect of the holy Eucharist. Concerning its other, or Sacramental Aspect, there is less need to speak here at large, since it is recognised more unreservedly by the Offices of our Church, and received more generally and heartily by her members. It will be enough at present simply to point out how this matter also is especially noticed in our Lord's farewell prayer. Observe then: what He asks for them is real and true sanctification, sanctification by the Word of the Father, which is Truth, sanctification by unity with Him. Christian unity is, most undeniably, the peculiar and paramount object of His great intercession—the unity of believers through the Son of God with the Father and with each other. “Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are.” This for the Apostles: the next is for ordinary Christians: “That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee. . . . I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.” I need scarcely remark, that this is the very blessing which He had some time before appropriated to the future Eucharistical Rite. Of Sacramental union with Himself He had said, “He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in Him. As the Living Father hath sent Me, and I

live by the Father, so He that eateth Me, even He shall live by Me." Of Sacramental union among Christians His Apostle wrote afterwards, "Ye being many are one Bread and one Body: for ye are all partakers of that one Bread." What then, though our Lord's intercession itself contain no direct mention of the Sacrament? yet the favour asked being in effect the spiritual grace of that Sacrament, and the time of asking, the very hour of its institution, as we cannot doubt, that in our Lord's purpose it was an Eucharistical blessing:—that when He said, "I Sanctify Myself, that they may be sanctified," He was thinking of the great oblation and participation of Himself:—so we may thankfully apply to our Communions, public and private, lowly and humble as they may be in many respects, all the great and unspeakable words, which the Great High Priest here speaks in our hearing to His Father. We may trust, that as often as we do this worthily in remembrance of Him, He both sanctifies Himself for our sakes, and causes us also, partaking of Him, to be sanctified in the truth.

Thus ample for instruction of doctrine are the words of His gracious intercession: consider them now as a treasure of inexhaustible consolation: and that we may not be quite lost in the greatness of the subject, let us help ourselves by imagining how the disciples who heard that prayer must have recalled it ever after: what a glory it must

have thrown over all their devotional exercises, more especially over their Communion, to feel that they were but the continuance of that first prevailing intercession : how amid all future troubles, but especially in spiritual troubles, they must have hastened back in thought to that moment for shelter and comfort. Did they feel at any time too much disappointed and mortified, at the imperfection and seeming failure of their efforts in God's cause? they might reflect that our Lord, then when He seemed at the lowest, had most perfectly glorified His Father on earth, and when to mankind He appeared to have done nothing, had finished the work which His Father gave Him to do. Were they overcome by a sense of loneliness, they in the world, and He in heaven with His Father? they would remember that He, before He went, had engaged the Father to keep them in His own Name, had willed that they should be with Him where He is. Had they defections to mourn over, perhaps among those very dear to them? their Lord had condescended to speak sadly of "the son of perdition." Did the world hate them? it was His token that they were not of the world, even as He was not of the world. Did they feel themselves, their persons and their system, still entangled with many imperfections? they would recollect, that He had expressly declined to pray that they should be taken out of the world, though He did pray that they might be kept from

the power of the evil one. Were they anxious about their converts, their spiritual children and posterity? He had interceded not for themselves only, but for all who should believe on Him through their word. Were they apt to be bewildered, and full of care, at the symptoms of disunion which they saw already among Christians, and at the fearful prospects of decay and division, which were opened to them by the Spirit of prophecy? they had in their hearts this sure and unfailing consolation, that Christ had prayed for all believers to be One; One, therefore, they must continue, in some high and saving sense, however widely separated to the outward eye. For the prayer of the Only-Begotten could not be in vain.

And we too, my brethren, in our moments of excitement and perplexity, more especially in our spiritual perplexities,—whither may we so well betake ourselves for soothing and support, as to the holy Eucharistical Services, which are in fact the continuation and expansion of our Lord's most gracious words?

When our frail weak souls are, according to their natural infirmity, in a tumult of earnest feelings on any event, glad or sorrowful:—when moments to which we have long looked forward are come, and we know not how to meet them worthily, how to order our hearts and minds in the Presence of God and our Lord Jesus Christ and the Elect Angels, amidst the rush and strife of

many contending emotions, hope and fear, penitence and thankfulness, deep reverence and overflowing love:—then may we discern and experience more clearly than usual the condescending mercy of our God and Saviour, in coming to us outwardly by His Sacraments, as well as inwardly by His Grace. We may discern His mercy in this among other respects, that He tells us what to think of, where to fix our minds for the time. He steadies and supports, strengthens and comforts us, by commanding and enabling us to remember Him: not simply Him, but Him engaged in some one definite work or suffering for our sakes.

Thus, what various overpowering thoughts must of course come thronging upon the mind, when infants are offered to God in Holy Baptism! far more, one may well believe, than anxious affectionate hearts would be able to endure, were it not for the soothing and solemn pictures, which He by His Church invites us to look upon: His own Baptism first in the river Jordan, and then His calling little children to Him, putting His Hands upon them, and blessing them. And so ever afterwards, through the whole course of our lives, we are invited to soothe and sanctify all our greater cares and joys, by approaching our Redeemer in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. Confirmation, Marriage, admission to Holy Orders, Dedication of Churches, the Coronation of a King, severe sickness, recovery from the pain and peril of

childbirth, or if there be any other occasion which more than another takes up the whole heart, those are the times when the Church more especially recommends or enjoins us to draw near by faith, and take that Holy Sacrament to our comfort. And at this time, and here among us, she has given the word of gracious invitation, she has repeated it over again like a true nursing mother, to those particularly, whom God has lately called to the great and good work of building up His House in this place. The Holy Church is not ignorant what a troublous world of thoughts and regrets, hopes, anxieties, and satisfactions, wishful and earnest longings and prayers, will naturally gather itself around such times as these: and to assuage and regulate and sanctify them all, she calls you from them by her authoritative voice. She bids you for a while forget yourself, and be wholly taken up with the Idea and Image of our Blessed Lord at those two most solemn times of His earthly humiliation, the Consecration of the Holy Communion, and the offering of Himself on the Cross.

For on those two moments of our Lord's earthly and visible life His will is that we should fix our entire attention, they should occupy our whole thoughts, when we draw near to receive Him as He has ordained. So our Church intimates, first in the Exhortation to the Communicants, and afterwards in the Consecration Prayer. We are

instructed at the outset of the more awful part of the Service to give "humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God, for that He gave His Son Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy Sacrament." Again, in the mysterious and wonder-working Prayer of Consecration, we acknowledge first the "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, which He made on the Cross for the sins of the whole world;" and then, how He "did institute, and in His holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that His precious death, until His coming again." These are the two pictures, one or other of which a devout communicant would desire to have, if possible, constantly before him. When he is humbling himself towards the Altar of his only Saviour and Redeemer, he would wish, were he by chance to lift up his eyes, to behold nothing but what should remind him either of Mount Calvary, or of that upper chamber where our Lord ate the Passover with His Disciples, and where in all probability the Holy Spirit afterwards came down upon them: one and the same place being ordained to witness both His sanctification of Himself for their sake, and their sanctification in Him Who is the Truth.

Keeping these two scenes before you in thought and imagination, fixing on them the eye of a strong faith, you will by God's blessing be enabled to cast

all your burthen upon Him, whether it be of joyful or of trembling expectation, and to come into His Holy Place with somewhat of angelical composure. The heavenly Comforter will assist you to make the memorial which Christ has appointed, not only in His Name, but also according to His mind and will.

What is there wanting in our Altars, to make the comers thereunto perfect? Have we not an Apostolical Creed, an Apóstolical Ministry, Apostolical yearnings after Unity? Have we not the presence of Angels in our hymns, of Saints departed in our holy commemorations? What ampler warrant need we ask in our time, for our belief that Christ is truly in our oblations and consecrations, sanctifying Himself for our sakes: and that we, receiving worthily, are sanctified by His Truth?

Well may we feel, as we look around, humbled, dejected, oppressed in heart by the broken and divided state of the Church, so unlike the accomplishment of our Lord's gracious Prayer. Here, then, let us resort for comfort: hither let us come to be united more entirely with our Lord; so shall we have union with each other also, though outwardly it seem otherwise; and in that faith we may wait patiently, till it please Him to heal the wounds of His mystical Body.

But you fear to come, because of your many sins. Nay, but here is confession and absolution:

here is memorial made of that Blood which hath virtue to take away the sin of the whole world: here is that offering for sin, which the Son commanded, which the Father hath promised to bless, which the Holy Spirit, duly invocated, descends upon, to sanctify and make it acceptable. Stand no more waiting and hesitating, but resolve henceforth to order your whole life with a view to this Holy Communion, which Christ meant to be all in all to us, and with a view to which the Church orders all her services. “O taste and see how gracious the Lord is: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.”

S E R M O N X I. *

COUNSELS OF PERFECTION.

ST. LUKE v. 11.

When they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him.

WHETHER the history of which this is the conclusion, the account of the miraculous draught of fishes, refer to the same event as related in St. Matthew and St. Mark, the first calling of the four first disciples, or no, has been much questioned, and apparently with good reason. But whichever of the two calculations may seem more probable, it seems very clear that St. Andrew was one of those whom St. Luke relates to have left all and followed our Saviour, as he was certainly one of the four, whose original call St. Matthew and St. Mark describe. In their Gospels he is mentioned by name: in St. Luke he is not indeed named, but it is clearly indicated that his brother Simon was not alone in the boat. The plural number is employed, both in our Lord's direction, and in the account of their obedience. "Launch

* Preached before the University of Oxford on the Feast of St. Andrew, 1841.

out into the deep water, and let down" (not "thy" but) "your nets for a draught." And again, "when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them: and they came, and filled both the ships . . . and he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: and so was also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon." There can be no reasonable doubt, I suppose, that as in the former instance, so now, (if the two instances were different;) St. Andrew, the Apostle of this day, was in the ship with his brother; and participated in St. Peter's final call, as he had in his first introduction to our Lord. It will not be therefore inappropriate, if we take occasion from the memory of St. Andrew to make some reflections on one circumstance of our Lord's method of training His Apostles for the hard and high task on which He meant to employ them: setting out from the details of the call and the miracle, as though both were one transaction, or at least not being careful to distinguish exactly between the two. For the moral of both will be the same: both exemplify the same rule of our Lord's mysterious doings on earth.

Nor is it perhaps without providential meaning, that on the first Saint's day in our Church's year

our regards should be turned towards a part of our Lord's history, so full of instruction concerning His Saints in general: their duty and their privileges, and the portion assigned them in His kingdom. As the day and hour when that kingdom was set up is known unquestionably, (for it is the great day of Pentecost,) so it has pleased our Lord to mark not indistinctly the day in His earthly life, in which He first began to prepare and educate those who were to be His representatives in that kingdom. It seems to have been about the forty-third day after our blessed Saviour's baptism, when He shewed Himself to St. John the Baptist, where He was standing with two of His disciples; who followed our Lord on hearing that He was the Lamb of God. One of those disciples the Gospel names, and it was St. Andrew. So far another was equally favoured with him. But in the next circumstance he appears distinguished from all others, as the very first who should bring a convert to our Saviour. "He first findeth his own brother Simon," tells him Whom he had found, and brings him to Jesus. The force of the word *first* seems to be, that the two who first saw our Lord, having separated each to look for a brother or near friend to whom he might relate these wonders, St. Andrew, by special providence, lighted first upon St. Peter: and thus, as an ancient writer beautifully remarks, Christ laid the foundations of His Church on brotherly love: as He had done

also in the Old Testament, beginning that earlier building from Moses and Aaron, who were brethren^b.

So far then, St. Andrew having precedence of all the other disciples of Christ, there seems an especial fitness in the place which our Calendar appoints to the day of his martyrdom. And although in that after calling, which caused him to become a regular attendant on our Lord, no particular eminence seems assigned him in comparison of the other three, yet, as he had so far led the way, there seems a propriety in reading on his memorial-day in particular the account of their common calling and adherence to Christ.

Thus the first faint stirring and movement of men's minds towards the kingdom of God was intimately associated with feelings of brotherly love. The second, the call of the four Apostles, as it kept up and in a manner multiplied this idea, (for they were *two* pairs of brethren,) so it gave the first example of self-sacrifice, as another main-spring of the Christian life, and perhaps the very chiefest of all. The sacrifice seems to have consisted in this, that whereas before they only knew that they were to look up to our Lord as the Great Teacher and Deliverer, with the same kind of reverence, only higher and deeper in degree, as they had paid to the Baptist,—but still understood themselves to be at liberty to go on with their ordinary

^b Op. imperf. in S. Math. ap. S. Chrys. Hom. 7. quoted in "Catena Aurea."

employments:—now they knew that they were literally to leave all and follow Him: to share His fortunes, Who they saw had not where to lay His head, and to take their chance of such persecution as seemed to be foreboded by the fate of the Baptist, and by the temper with which our Lord had been received in Jerusalem. This was their sacrifice: and by accepting it as they did, they led the van in that noble army of Martyrs and Confessors, who in all ages of the Church have been so touched with dutiful love of their Redeemer's Cross, as to be ready to take up and bear their own cross with joy.

It is on this subject, the spirit of self-sacrifice, how it is encouraged and at the same time regulated by observation of our Lord's intercourse with these His earliest followers, that I wish now to make a few plain observations.

I think it will appear to a diligent reader of the Gospels, that our Saviour almost always followed up His invitations given to great efforts of self-denial, and His recommendations and praises of them, with some cautionary words or actions inculcating humility and soberness of mind. Thus after that exciting call, (for exciting in a certain sense it must have been,) which brought the four disciples suddenly away from their home and kindred and employments, to wait on Him, and witness His wonderful miracles, He loses no time in setting forth the true character of His kingdom:

for the next thing the Gospel tells us of is His Sermon on the Mount, in which the order of the Beatitudes is this; that they begin and end with the Kingdom of Heaven, but it is assigned in the first instance to the poor in spirit, and not until other kindred virtues and graces have been mentioned, such as meekness, peace-making, purity of heart, is the same blessing pronounced upon suffering for righteousness' sake. Not till those humble and quiet dispositions have been commended, which belong alike to all times and circumstances, is any thing said in praise of what may be called the heroic virtues of a Christian: affliction, scorn, and calumny endured for Christ's sake. Surely this is a significant circumstance, and much to be considered by all who may have made any sacrifices for Christ, or may think they find in themselves any heart to do so. They are not to be satisfied with themselves, till their humility and charity has been tried as well as their self-denial.

If we suppose the narrative in St. Luke, and the miraculous draught of fishes, to belong to a different occasion from the former call: this gives us a second instance of the instructive caution I am now attributing to our Lord: for this was shortly followed by the ordination of the Apostles, and by the Sermon then pronounced, in which the same order of the Beatitudes is observable. It had also been preceded, no very long time, by the

calling of St. Matthew; a more remarkable instance even than the former one, of leaving all to follow Christ.

Another very eminent and critical point in our Lord's preparation for His approaching kingdom was the promise to St. Peter, that he should have the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, to which succeeded the earnest warning to take up the Cross and follow Christ. As this led to the Transfiguration, the height of spiritual joy, so that again to the silence imposed on the high thoughts of the disciples by setting a little child before them. The series of lessons begun in self-denial was imperfect, and came to nothing, unless so far as it was accompanied by humility.

Observe next the order of the precepts in the nineteenth chapter: that which, to use an expressive phrase adopted by Bishop Taylor and others, may be called eminently the Chapter of Counsels of Perfection. First, one particular kind of self-denial for Christ's sake is commended in the well-known words, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it:" then little children are brought to Him, and welcomed: and their temper, the temper most opposite to all self-praise, all thought of one's own sacrifices, is declared essential to a place in the kingdom of Heaven.

The very next thing which occurs is the case of the rich young man, to whom was offered the privilege of embracing voluntary poverty, and whose

fearfulness St. Peter contrasted with the zeal of the Apostles. Upon which what ensues? First, a parable, the point of which is, that “many that are first shall be last, and the last first;” and then a conversation, which results in the solemn saying, whereby we know what sort of person shall eventually be first: “Whosoever will be greatest among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”

Considering these and similar instances, we shall perhaps see reason to apprehend, that the temper of mind which leads men to what appear great sacrifices for Christ’s sake, noble and dutiful as it is in many respects, yet has its peculiar dangers, and that its remedy and safeguard is, in one word, childlike humility.

Similar thoughts are forced upon the mind, when we consider the manner in which He commonly introduced the topic of self-sacrifice to those whom He destined for such a privilege, and the sort of persons from whom He specially required it. His manner seems always to have been to prepare them gradually for it: as if, like some of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, it were not fit for all persons, and might do more harm than good, if forced upon unprepared minds.

This circumstance also is strongly put before us by the calling of the four Apostles, which we commemorate to-day. Two of them we know had been the Baptist’s disciples before, and had been, one

may say, expressly sent to Jesus by him. The other two, as friends and partners with them, could not be ignorant of the wonders which they were beginning to know : though we should suppose the notion untenable which some of the ancients entertained, that St. John the Evangelist himself was the companion of St. Andrew on his first access to our Lord, and that he omits his own name, as is his custom elsewhere. In any case, the call to follow Christ was not sudden, but one for which they had been long in training. And if, as great authorities suppose, there were two separate calls by the lake of Gennesaret, the one more peremptory than the other, of course the first was an effective preparation for the second.

The like remark might be made on other cases, in which our Lord uttered His Counsels of Perfection to individuals. St. Matthew, though he followed at the first summons, did not quite at once give up all that he had : for we find him afterwards making our Saviour a great feast in his own home. The rich young man, by the very act of coming to our Lord with the question about eternal life, shewed a mind more or less prepared for high requirements, though not as yet up to the level of what was eventually demanded of him. There may be other cases where no hint of the kind is given. But enough appears to shew, that not every person is ripe at once for such open sacrifice of himself. And when we feel called, as some

will in every age, to any strong step of that sort, it cannot but deeply concern us to see to it, that we are not too unlike those whom our Blessed Lord was accustomed to honour with such calls. For though the sacrifice may be noble in itself, yet it may be that according to the laws of His Kingdom we are not proper persons to offer it.

This brings me to the other point, which, it was just now said, our Lord in His Counsels of Perfection seems plainly to have regarded: the previous character of those whom He favoured with them. This is greatly to be observed, especially here in His first open act of preparation for His Church, as illustrating both the call itself, and His ways of dealing subsequently with those who obeyed it.

If any one, for example, be zealous and energetic in his love of a good cause, and of good men, keenly impressed with the sense of his own faults and infirmities, and never slow to confess them and punish himself for them: such an one has so far ground of hope, that he, like the first of the Apostles, St. Peter, may at some time be counted worthy of making a sacrifice for Christ's sake: but then he must expect, like the same Apostle, to be often reprovèd, and cautioned, and kept back, by the voice of the Church, by the advice of those who through long obedience may be supposed to know best the mind of the Church, by many a providential hint of one kind or another; lest he err

(and the error may be ever so grievous) through confidence in his own feelings.

Suppose next one of a different cast of character, more sedate, and what is called more practical: affectionate and domestic, and ever watching to do good both in body and soul to those who are in any way connected with him: punctual and exact, and observant, for duty's sake, even of all minor details of business and behaviour: such an one would appear to have the same ground of goodness in him, as the blessed Saint whom we this day commemorate: so far then it would not be surprising, if the Providence of God called him also to some great and signal act of self-denial: he is no unlikely instrument, perhaps, to be employed in winning many to Christ at some great temporal cost to himself. And may we not say, that this kind of character too may find, even in the little that is recorded of St. Andrew, a warning appropriate to its own peculiar danger? For what is that danger? It would be expressed, I imagine, by what in common conversation we should call a tendency to be *over-practical*: an inclination to make too much of difficulties in action, which it cannot help seeing perhaps more clearly than others; and so far a deficiency in the spirit of faith, which it requires a very affectionate heart to counteract. The holy Martha, the sister of Lazarus, appears to have been a person of this class: and such too might St. Andrew naturally

be; at least, her scruple about opening the grave answers well enough to his remark, when the miracles of the loaves and fishes was in preparation. "There is a lad here, which hath" such and such supplies: "but what are they among so many?" This sounds very like the demurring of a man of business, a practical man, when some great and good work requiring extraordinary faith is proposed. And how does our Lord meet it? He simply passes it by, as if the words had never been spoken, and goes on to perform His mighty work, as if there were nothing uncommon in it. "Make the men sit down," He says: as if He had replied, "You shall soon see what it will come to, only do as you are directed." Plain simple uninquiring obedience, when a thing is commanded with sufficient authority, seems to be the proper exercise, and appointed remedy, for the kind of temper which has been now described. Such men's error in respect of sacrifice will probably be a too great backwardness and unwillingness to incur it, except where personal affection urges them on in spite of difficulties. //

Of the third great Apostle, St. James, so little is recorded, that it may almost seem fanciful to draw any moral from his share in our Saviour's call. But it may be, that this silence itself implies a good deal. Is it not clear, as far as one may judge of God's providential dealings with His Church, that from time to time He prepares persons who are to

do Him service in the way of self-sacrifice, by deep retirement, by quiet study and devotion? If St. James were intended to stand in a manner at the head of this class, the warning given to him and his brother, when seeking the highest place in the Kingdom, may point out one of the temptations which they are especially to guard against. It is no small authority which says, "Ambition, or an untimely desire of higher advancement, under colour of doing more good, is a great stumbling-block to the holiness of scholars^c." Heresy itself, in some instances, appears to have owed its origin to neglect of this caution, endangering and ultimately spoiling many a high and noble character, and turning self-sacrifice into a subtle self-indulgence.

Less need be said of St. John, the last of that highly-favoured four, as his character stands out on the surface of Scripture: evidently it was his natural tendency to a pure undivided feeling of dutiful loyalty, seeking only to approve itself to its object, not dwelling at all on good done, or effects produced,—this was what qualified him to forsake all, and follow his Saviour. No less evidently it was his indulging this occasionally as a human feeling, not chastening and elevating it as a divine principle, which drew down on him more than once the rebuke of his Master. "Ye know not what ye ask—ye know not what spirit ye are of." Who dare trust his own consciousness of his own

^c Herbert's Country Parson.

good intentions and feelings, when he hears such cautions as these addressed by the Searcher of Hearts to His own beloved disciple, who seemed to himself at the time actuated by nothing but generous and dutiful attachment ?

Particularly it may seem, that in the absence of our Lord's visible Presence, our behaviour with regard to the true and high doctrine concerning Him supplies the same kind of test, and is beset with the same kind of danger, as is suggested by St. John's conduct to Him personally on earth.

There are persons who feel their hearts swell within them at the very sound of the Creeds of the Church, and have felt so from their youth up : to whom it seems as if by God's grace they could make any sacrifice, rather than give up Christ or His Church. If they have been pure and obedient in their lives, they too are a kind of persons, for whom, judging by the experience of the first disciples, Almighty God may be not unlikely to prepare severe trials, Confessors' or Martyrs' crowns. Pity that they should either fail of them, or stain their lustre, by confidence in their own orthodoxy, by slighting thoughts of others, or by any thing else that mars their lowliness of heart. Such, we may believe, was the warning intended for them, when our Lord, with the little child before Him, whom He had presented to His Apostles as a kind of sacrament of humility, proceeded to reprove the beloved disciple for

checking one who wrought miracles in His Name, because he was not one of the Apostolical company. The passage, as applied to us, seems to say, "You have devoted yourself to Christ—that is well: but take care that you be not indulging, under the idea of loyal sacrifice, a selfish taste of your own. And it is a bad sign for you in this respect, if you grudge others, Catholic believers like yourselves, the good they do, and the privileges they enjoy: if you would fain forbid those whom our Lord has empowered to work miracles in His Name."

In this way the call of the four disciples, taken along with our Lord's subsequent admonitions, conveys implicitly the whole doctrine of self-sacrifice, and the most necessary cautions against abusing the occasions of it. Each of the four, it will be observed, has his own singular blessing:—stands, in some way or other, first. St. Peter is first in the College of Apostles, St. Andrew first in coming to our Lord at all, St. James first to receive the crown of martyrdom, St. John first as the disciple whom Jesus loved. But in this one respect St. Andrew stands before all the rest: that they seem to have been, more or less, converted through his instrumentality. A thing much to be regarded,—that natural affection and calm usefulness should be preferred as instruments to begin that holiest work, before higher and rarer and more engaging qualities. Might it not be that the sacrifices so originating

are the least likely to be blemished by proud or self-indulgent thoughts ?

The whole subject abounds with instruction, both for the ministers of Christ, in their management of Counsels of Perfection, and for those Christians, who feel as if such counsels were addressed, with more or less distinctness, to themselves individually. At no time can this be a merely theoretical subject. There will always be many, whose appointed trial lies mainly in such things ; many, whose minds tend in one way or another towards great movements and visible sacrifices.

It seems very desirable, that such persons should not be left to their feelings, but directed early to the helps which the Church has provided for them, and taught habitually to refer themselves to our Lord's guidance of His disciples as a standard, whereby they may judge whether any step which suggests itself to them would indeed be a forsaking all and following Christ, or whether it might not be more truly ascribed to some refined variety of self-indulgence.

On the one hand, our Lord's frequent sayings, nay the whole tenor of His teaching, in deed as well as word, are far too express to bear any general disparagement of Counsels of Perfection, as visionary or mischievous, either in ourselves, or in those with whom we may be intrusted. " He that is able to receive it, let him receive it," is a saying which extends further than to its own

immediate subject: and great indeed, nay intolerable, must be their responsibility, who either by ridicule or by seeming argument, or by what is perhaps more common and worse than either, by a cold worldly contempt, discourage the very idea of such things, and try to tread out the spark of primitive self-denial.

Yet it is almost as bad on the other hand, when unthinking indiscriminate encouragement is accorded to feelings having that tendency; a fault, I fear, not rarely committed through a certain easiness and slothfulness of mind. Persons to whom God in some way has given authority, hear plans formed and sentiments uttered, implying a disposition to forsake all and follow Christ, and they repress them or give them their way, just according to their own humour or feelings:; not considering, that as the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven are not for all persons, so neither are our Lord's Counsels of Perfection; and that as it is a grievous thing to keep them back from those whom He has prepared for them, so it is a sacrilegious and hurtful thing to let such pearls be scattered at random, among those who in spite of present good impulses may for aught we know be unclean at heart.

As therefore we would not in any way disparage true primitive self-denial, on the contrary, we honour and revere it, and account it most exceedingly blessed; we make no question that these

are they who bring forth fruit an hundred fold ; who build on the One true Foundation the purest gold, silver, and precious stones :—so in proportion would we beseech those who feel themselves impelled to seeming acts of high self-denial, to search and probe their own hearts the more unsparingly, lest there be something there cherished, tending to make their outward sacrifices void and profane. It is a truism to say so, yet it may require to be said, that real self-denial is inward as well as outward : great and heroic efforts are not to be an exception to our habitual course of thought and conduct, lights shining in a dark place, but rather an exemplification of it, brighter spots in a surface which is all brightness : and therefore it is generally far happier for those who are gradually trained up to them, than for such as suddenly and eagerly venture on them.

Two tests especially appear to be appointed for men to try such impulses by, dutifulness, and a charitable fear of causing Christ's little ones to stumble. I do not of course mean that a Christian is never called on to do what in some respects may appear undutiful, or otherwise scandalous, or both : if it were not so, our Lord would not have said, " If a man come to Me, he must hate father and mother." Yet He condemned those also who pleaded a religious vow for refusing due succour to their parents : and will not such His sentence tell against us, if we permit excited feelings, be

the matter ever so sacred, to make us unmindful of what we owe to any kind of parental authority? // St. Peter and St. Andrew, though they forsook all, did not so in such a sense as to imply alienation from their parents: for we find them presently afterwards in the house of Simon, attending on his sick mother-in-law. And though for the time the sons of Zebedee left their father in the ship, we know that St. John still so far resided with his mother in his own house, as to be able to take the Blessed Virgin Mary there from the hour when our Lord was crucified.

Neither, lastly, is it easy to over-rate the exceeding responsibility men take upon themselves, when they act on any feeling whatever without consideration of those, whom our Lord emphatically calls His little ones, that is, of all those among Christians, who are on any account likely to look up to them. Who would not fear to touch even with so much as one of his fingers, the burthen which in its full weight is worse than a mill-stone tied about a man's neck, and cast with him into the depth of the sea? It may be partly on this account, that our Saviour has so particularly enjoined secrecy, to the very utmost of our power, in all self-sacrifice. But when from circumstances we must submit to the pain and danger of setting an example, let us not least pray and strive that no excitement may prevent our putting ourselves in the place of those who may be offended by us. // And if, as most

commonly will be the case, we find ourselves after all in perplexity, obliged to act, though in all modes of acting we discern probable offences which we know not how to obviate: let us at least humble ourselves, as not knowing how far some sin of ours may have forfeited the blessing of entire light and guidance: and let us beseech God that our errors, if err we must, may at least be on the side of dutifulness, humility, and true self-denial. //

SERMON XII.*

ENDURANCE OF CHURCH IMPERFECTIONS

JER. xlv. 4, 5.

The Lord saith thus: Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted, will I pluck up, even this whole land: and seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.

IT is not to be supposed, that the deep distress of Baruch, which caused this awful yet gracious message from the Almighty, was merely of an ordinary and temporal sort, such as any person might feel, on the sight of great affliction coming on his country, and likely to involve himself and his family. The immediate occasion of it leads rather to the conclusion, that it was religious perplexity:—the sense of God's wrath, and a bewildering doubt whether it were possible for him to escape it. For Baruch's distress came on, we find, when he had written for the first time the words

* Written for the Feast of St. Andrew, 1841, to be preached before the University.

of Jeremiah, from his dictation, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, in that warning "roll of a book," which the king, a few months after, so profanely destroyed, In executing that duty he had vividly brought before him the true and most alarming purport of Jeremiah's prophecies; the rather, as in that year (so we learn by comparison of dates) the Babylonish armies first came upon the Holy Land^b. The miserable certainty therefore was forcing itself daily more and more upon Baruch's mind, that God's ancient law and covenant were broken—that He had, for a time at least, cast off His people. His dispensation seemed to fail; to be made void by the perverseness of men. The foundations were cast down, and what was the righteous to do?

It is not very easy for us, connecting as we habitually do the events of those times with the contemporary prophecies, and with the hope of the better dispensation to come, to enter into the fulness of the grief and perplexity, which in that crisis must have overcast such surveys as good and true Israelites might take of God's moral government: a grief and perplexity in some respects aggravated in proportion to the fidelity and diligence with which they had before applied themselves to His Word. The Law of God, it would appear, had become impossible to be kept, His Covenant impossible to be fulfilled. The earth had again

^b 2 Kings xxiv. 1; Jerem. xxv. 1; xlv. 2.

come to be without form and void, and a thick darkness had settled down over the deep of the counsels of the Almighty^c.

It is this, and not merely the sense of God's present anger, still less the outward and bodily calamities of the time, which will best explain the deep corroding anguish, the chillness of heart and utter desolation, which reign in the Lamentations especially of Jeremiah, and in many other of the prophetic writings of the age just before the captivity.

It has been well observed, that the treasures of Evangelical Prophecy were critically vouchsafed at this very time to support the faithful remnant in this most afflictive trial. But in order to receive these worthily and effectually, as to receive the Gospel itself, a certain mind and temper were required. And it would seem that the admonition, here addressed to Baruch, shortly describes that mind and temper. Baruch had said, "Woe is me now, for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow: I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest." He was utterly dismayed and out of heart: his hands were weakened, and his knees enfeebled: he found no rest for his wandering thoughts: like another Prophet of the captivity, Habakkuk, he was amazed, because "the Law" seemed to be "slackened," and "judgment" appeared never to "go forth^d." God Himself, by one of His chief Prophets, sends

^c See Davison on Prophecy, Disc. vi. p. iii. §. 6. ^d Hab. i. 4.

Baruch in this distress an especial message to soothe and support him. He was but as any private believer : yet expressly on his account the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, and the form of address to him was, “ Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch.” A sufficient intimation, surely, of the merciful sympathy which is in heaven for the distressed and doubting conscience : only let the accompanying practical message be duly weighed and faithfully submitted to. When God seems to be breaking down what He hath built, and plucking up what He hath planted ; when we know not how soon our house may be left unto us desolate ; let us not then, of all times, be seeking great things for ourselves ; neither in the way of temporal safety and ease, nor even in the way of spiritual assurance and comfort ; but let us turn our thoughts more dutifully than ever to the plain straightforward keeping of the Commandments of God, to the calls and obligations of every hour and moment ; to purity, charity, humility, and the fear of God : accounting it a great thing, if we do but probably see our way in the very next step we are to take, and if we have but a reasonable chance of being in God’s Church now, and of pardon and peace when we come to the eternal world. Even as Baruch was to be contented with living on from day to day through those years of banishment and tribulation : and whatever comfort he might derive from the great

Evangelical Prophecies occasionally vouchsafed, was to be over and above the promise :—more than he might dare to expect or depend on.

I wish to offer a few remarks on the application of this principle to the religious perplexities of our own time and country. The subject, indeed, may not seem appropriate to an occasion of festival joy. But it will be found, I trust, not ill suited to the commemoration of that Apostle, whose great characteristic seems to have been entire disinterestedness, both in waiting himself on our Lord, and in bringing others to Him. For surely to serve God loyally in doubt and anguish and perplexity concerning the faith, it is as great a trial of disinterestedness, as to serve Him in the midst of outward and bodily discomforts. And the same simplicity and dutifulness of heart, which guided Saint Andrew, and through him others, straight to our Saviour, in the midst of their Judaical prejudices, will doubtless be blessed in its serious endeavours to keep hold of Him, amid the embarrassments, hardly less serious, of our time and of our country.

Now, as before each of the captivities of Israel, the great perplexity of the religious mind arises out of the apparent failure of God's promises. What caused Baruch to "faint in his sighing," and to "find no rest?" What but the divisions of Israel first, then their idolatry and backslidings, and lastly what seemed to the eye of man the near approach

of their utter rejection and the very extinction of their worship? so that even such a Prophet as Jeremiah, with all his insight into the hopes of the future, was in a manner constrained to cry out, "Ah, Lord God, surely Thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace, whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul." What is the great cause of the doubt and anxiety, amounting sometimes even to agony of spirit, which is more or less experienced by so many in various portions of the Church, at this present moment? "For the *divisions* of Reuben are great searchings of heart." Without going into particulars, or presumptuously affecting to allot to the several portions of Christendom their several degrees of blame for so calamitous a state of things: the simple circumstance of the Body of Christ being broken up into three portions, mutually separated from each other, at least in regard of formal and acknowledged communion, is enough to excite very real and sad misgivings, in any mind accustomed to measure things by the plain Canons of Scripture and of the early Church. Compare it with such Prophecies as, "In that day there shall be one Lord, and His Name One: then will I turn unto the people a pure language, and they shall all call upon the Name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent;" or, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children;" or, "My Dove, my undefiled is but One." Or again,

compare this state of things with the doctrinal descriptions of the Church given in the New Testament. "There is one Body and one Spirit." Or take our Lord's own Intercession: "That they all may be one in Us." Who shall deny that such descriptions as these imply an outward and visible Unity, such an Unity as the world can take notice of, else how should it thence learn belief? such an Unity as should be no more doubtful or equivocal, (speaking on a large scale, of great bodies of Christians and for a long time,) than the Form of Baptism, or the faith connected with that Form: faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?

Now it matters not much, in this view of the case, to which of the great sections of Christendom we belong. Allow what preponderance you will to any one portion of it, Eastern or Western, in respect either of miracles, or of continued visible unity within itself: still the broad fact remains, and must be more or less perplexing when it is known, that portions of the Christian world, positively of such an extent, and bearing outwardly the appearance of Christian Churches, are out of communion with it. There is nothing parallel to this in the ancient Church. We cannot be certain that the unhesitating challenges of St. Cyprian in the third century, and of St. Augustine in the fourth, which to some appear to make communion with Rome a necessary index of Catholicity, would at all apply to the case. To

us at least in this country, and over a full third part of Christendom, the contrary appears at first sight. At all events, the matter is not so clear as the sayings of Scripture and Antiquity would lead us to expect the notes of the Church should be.

On the other hand, think as highly as we may of the comparative purity of particular Churches, Roman, Oriental, or Anglican, in doctrine and worship, still the thought of separation from very great companies of Christian people cannot but hang heavy on the heart of any one who has tried to realize our Lord's declarations about unity: and that so much the more, as there is less apparent longing in those among whom his own lot is cast, for the remedy of so great an evil. If we saw men's minds tending to unity, if we knew that many prayed with Bishop Taylor, "Unite us all in faith and hope and charity, and in external communion, when it shall seem good in Thine Eyes:" then the want of the outward forms of such communion would be far less distressing: but what if on both sides there appear a proud repulsiveness, which looks as if the spirit of schism had imbued the very substance of the Church?

In short, turn our eyes which way we will, decay and degradation seem to meet them, because the Church is no longer visibly *one*.

Again, in the Church we naturally look for a guide in all material points, both of doctrine and worship. She is "the pillar and ground of the

Truth"—the continuance of the divine building, whereof the foundation is the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head Corner Stone: to which exclusively and properly belongs the Truth of whatever was shadowed in the former dispensations. Till the Kingdom of God came, the doctrines of salvation were but prophetic words: its establishment turned them into realities. In this sense, and not merely historically, as the witness and keeper of it, she is the "pillar and ground of the truth." So speaks an ancient Bishop in his brief exposition of these words: "Believers, as forming one Church, are called the pillar and ground of the Truth, because of their abiding, founded upon the Rock, impassive to all storms, by their very deeds and realities proclaiming the truth of our doctrines*."

This being so, we are naturally disconcerted if the Church fail to speak out on any important doctrine or rite; any thing which in its nature must make up a considerable part of our Creed, or of our worship: or if her sayings, *prima facie*, seem to contradict Holy Scripture. So far she disappoints expectations, which at first sight appear not unscriptural: and leaves us in doubt and care, where full satisfaction seemed to be promised.

Now what is our own condition in this respect, in this generation, here in all countries of the West? It is true, and surely we cannot be too thankful for it—it is a blessing far beyond reasonable hope, considering what our deserts have been—that the present

* Theodoret.

Church comes to us as an unequivocal witness of the great foundations of the faith. Concerning the mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Incarnation and Redemption, of our Lord's Person and Office, she is a complete and sure guide; her exposition of Scripture is not dubious, nor hesitating. But when we go on to those Articles of the Creed, which concern the Body of Christ, and the privileges thereto appertaining;—the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Communion of Saints, the one Baptism for the remission of sins,—and inquire in what sense they are to be interpreted and developed; presently we are met in one place by a startling indecision, in another by a no less startling positiveness about matters which Scripture and Antiquity seem either to leave open, or to determine another way.

Our own Church (I desire to speak with all tenderness and reverence) appears to many to speak less decisively, than the obvious aspect of Primitive Antiquity would lead one to expect, on some grave doctrinal points. Each one of these would prove a real and sorrowful, though not we trust an intolerable, perplexity to an ancient Catholic believer, could we conceive such an one to be suddenly transported into our times: and he might be tempted to look with a wistful eye towards other portions of the Church, which might seem to promise him guidance, not only distinct, but peremptory. But would this relieve his perplexity, or only transfer it? Surely, when he

came to discover how many additions to the ancient Creed he should be compelled to receive, as necessary to salvation; what petitions he was encouraged, nay commanded, to offer to created beings—petitions requiring much subtlety of explanation to justify them from the charge of direct idolatry:—he might well say in his heart, “Whatever I might have done, had Providence laid this burden on me, it can hardly be right to put myself voluntarily under it.”

Thus, whichever way he turned, he must endure the perplexity of having to decide for himself on matters, which in earlier and happier times he would have found decided without question, for all reverent and dutiful minds.

The discipline of the Church is another point, which at first sight (and throughout this argument I am only speaking of the acknowledged appearance of things) could hardly fail to trouble and disquiet a mind imbued with the old ecclesiastical notions. Where are we to find it? It has vanished from among ourselves, by our own confession, who annually pray for its return: and has it not in good measure vanished in practice and influence from other parts of Christendom also? In both its theory is acknowledged, and there is constant, however faint, hope and prayer for its revival: we trust therefore that in neither case is the being of the Church affected by this imperfection. Still, considering that Scripture bears

testimony to our Lord's own institution of this discipline, as expressly as to that of the holy Sacraments themselves, the disappearance of it is a very serious fact; corresponding in the supernatural government of the Church to those irregularities in the moral government of the world, which caused such astonishment and grief of heart to Prophets and Psalmists in old time*. Their remedy was, to go "into the sanctuary of God," and there "understand the end of these men:" ours, to read in the Divine oracles, in the Parables of our Lord Himself, His warning, that offences must ever be expected in His Kingdom, which would not therefore cease to be His Kingdom. But how much of grace and perfection is lost, by the Church submitting for any length of time to this absence of discipline:—that is another question, and a very anxious one.

Once more; whatever may be thought of any abstract doctrine of Counsels of Perfection, it cannot be denied that two Churches, or two ages of the Church, may differ widely from one another in the tone of thought which they encourage concerning voluntary privations endured, or sacrifices made, for Christ's sake: and there may be some who so understand holy Writ, as to find it a real ground of perplexity and alarm, when the School or Church in which their lot is cast appears to them to frown on such endeavours to take up the

* Psalm lxxiii, xciv. Eccles. ix. 1—3. &c.

Cross. Whether or no this be the case with our Church or with the prevalent school within it, as compared with earlier ages and other countries, it belongs not to the present argument positively to affirm or deny ; but surely it were too bold to say, there are no appearances of it : and in proportion to such appearances must be the temptation of ardent and devout minds, over-wistfully to long and reach after such helps as they imagine may be found in other Communions : a temptation which may and ought to be met practically by the like exercise of self-control as any other indulgence of our natural feelings ; yet a real and sore trial, and one which especially requires the sympathy and prayers of all good people for those who are labouring under it. God forbid that our English Church should ever so far forget her charity, and I will add, her humility too, as to make no allowance for scruples and yearnings of this sort. It would not be a reason for leaving her Communion ; no mere moral defect would be so : but who shall say how far it might forfeit God's blessing, or how justly it might bring on us the character we so much deprecate of a cruel Church ?

But however men may seem to fail us, there is instruction and comfort, we may be sure, laid up in the Scriptures of God for this as for every other trial. And I return to the instruction and comfort there laid up in store for that particular kind of affliction. We shall find that it comes in effect

to the same which the Gospel prescribes for all afflictions whatever. "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." We are invited to go out of ourselves, not to allow ourselves to be swallowed up by our own particular distress, but so to contemplate the Cross of Christ, His sufferings either in Himself or His members, as to have our own united, mysteriously but really, to Him. Thus when Baruch, too keenly touched with his own share in the calamities of his time, fainted in his sighing, and could find no rest, the divine message to him was in effect, "Let your consolation be this: to go out of yourself, out of your own private afflictions, and bear a part in the overwhelming trials of the Household of God, now seeming to be forsaken. Teach yourself to acquiesce in what befalls you, by considering how strange it would seem, how unaccountable in the sight of the Angels, were you to be exempt from fear and anguish, now when the windows from on high are opened, and the foundations of the earth do shake. Rather learn to take with thankfulness your own share of perplexity, as a token of hope that you are yet in God's Household, since you are accounted worthy to be afflicted in her affliction."

Why should not this, God's appointed way of comfort of old, apply itself, among other griefs, to the religious difficulties which may be occasioned to some by the present state of the Church among us? If the whole Kingdom of God be

indeed in the decayed condition, which so many appearances indicate; how dare any individual among us seek great things for himself, either in the way of certainty or of sensible comfort? To warn an acute mind, in spiritual dimness and anguish, against much use of its own argumentative powers, a practical mind against trusting the good which it seems to behold actually done, a sensitive mind against its own seeming experiences whether of improvement or consolation, is but to repeat in different forms one and the same evangelical maxim, "Walk by faith, not by sight;" "distrust whatever seems to bring present comfort, knowing your own unworthiness of it, and deeply feeling that you are not the persons to be led exactly right, when all around is decay and error." Who among us have led such lives, that we may safely trust our own impressions of having received full satisfaction, either in our judgment or in our feelings? They have too much of a seeming Paradise in them, too little of the Cross. So that a rightly disposed and considerate person, I should think, would rather be startled and rendered suspicious by arguments and statements which sound entirely satisfactory; by experiments appearing to answer in every point, by systems which leave no spot unguarded or unprovided for. Or again, if his trial lay rather in the heart than in the intellect, he would not lightly permit himself to be influenced by imaginations, right or wrong, of

privileges offered him in other schools or communities. Not that he will of course utterly disbelieve such statements, far less treat them with scorn and irreverence. Still, as far as he is himself concerned, he will greatly mistrust the probable effect of any change, which is made not out of simple obedience, but for comfort's sake, and from a longing after abstract perfection. "Such and such a rule of devotion," he may perhaps think; "such and such an instance of full and entire Communion, such and such a holy Sacramental rite, such and such a way of approach to our ordained Guides, though in itself a great blessing, yet might not be a blessing to me. Nay, these things will assuredly fail to be blessings, so far as we are influenced in seeking them by a desire to avoid the Cross." Thus he will "refrain his soul and keep it low, like as a child that is weaned from its mother:" not helping himself to the full of those spiritual satisfactions even which may seem with a little trouble to be within his reach; and cheerfully foregoing them altogether, if they are not to be had without wandering from his own Communion.

For to a mind so constituted, the act of God's Providence, appointing his portion here or there, will be far more decisive in keeping him where he is, than any dream of promised comfort or assurance in withdrawing him from his post.

Now if any be thus minded, determined to bear doubt and misgiving as well as other tokens of the

Lord's indignation, in the consciousness of having sinned against Him : resolved by God's grace not to despair either of his Church or of himself, though he pretend not to see the position of either with distinctness :—to such an one it seems as if the prophetic words of our Lord would come with peculiar force, and cause him more than ever to shrink from excitements and charges, and from taking the management of his soul into his own hands : I mean, His word of warning expressly left us for the trying times of the Church. “Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders.” Not even miracles therefore, outward and visible ones, will be any sufficient sign of the true Church. Neither again will her abode be strange or obscure ; in the desert, or in the secret chambers. But her great note will be, to be conspicuous, and manifest unto all men. “As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.” We translate it “coming,” but the word is *παρουσία*, and is understood by old expositors to relate not only to the final approach of our Lord to judge the world in the last day, but also to His continual manifestation of Himself in His Kingdom. His invisible Presence therefore in His mystical Body may be as clearly discerned by those who watch

and wait for it, as a flash of lightning by a person whose eyes are open and turned towards that quarter of the heavens.

We know what use is made of this text, and of the comment of St. Augustine upon it, to enforce communion with Rome as an absolute condition of being within the Church. But let its true practical force be considered, as it applies to any one among ourselves. Does it not seem to say to us, “ If the Communion in which you are placed by God’s Providence has *prima facie* the most evident notes of the Church, all except visible Communion with other parts of Christendom: if it appear to be linked by due succession with those who were sent out to preach among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem: if it acknowledge the same Scriptures, and interpret them by the same Creeds, as did the whole Church in her days of perfect union: if it seem also to possess the Holy Sacraments unmutilated in all things essential, or at least as completely so as those who invite you away from it: (for surely the omission of the Cup in the Eucharist is in itself a greater liberty to take with the institution of Jesus Christ, than any deviation allowed by us from the services of the early Church;)—if your Church, moreover, pray constantly for the actual Communion which it unhappily wants, and have never yet forfeited it, as the Donatists did, by pronouncing other Churches out of the Body of Christ:—then continue in it, and do your best for it, by prayer,

by good works, by patience, by self-denial, by humility: not encouraging in yourself any doubt of Christ's Presence within it, but so endeavouring to realize that Presence, that you may do what in you lies towards recovering the fulness of His grace, both for this and for other portions of His Body: full and actual as well as virtual unity: full and definite guidance in all material points, as well as in the fundamentals of the Faith: full Sacraments where they are now mutilated: the body of discipline where there is now but the desire of it: encouragement for high and self-denying rules of life, where such are now but barely tolerated."

Judging by God's doings of old, the way of the Cross is the only way, by which these blessings can ever be restored. And as things stand at present, the mark of the Cross seems rather to belong to those who struggle on in a decayed and perhaps still decaying Church, bearing their burden as they may, than to those who allow their imaginations to dwell on fancied improvements, and blessings to be obtained on possible changes of Communion. "Go not after them, nor follow them," is a voice which may well seem intended to sound in the ears of all who feel any such perilous inclination. Where is the clear, the indisputable, the lightning-like evidence, that Jesus Christ is with others in a higher and better sense than He is with us? If much may be said one way, may not much also be said another way?

But that Presence which we are taught to look for can no more be questioned than the presence of the lightning in the Heavens. Allowing It to be where the Visible Church is by her Creeds, her Scriptures, her Succession, and her Sacraments, then It is clearly both with us and with them. But when we descend to minuter or less definite marks, presently questions arise, affecting, some our claim, some theirs, some perhaps those of the oriental Churches. So that the fact is no longer obvious and palpable. Either therefore the whole Church is so decayed, that our Saviour's test can in no case be applied; which seems contrary to plain promises: or it is a test practically available for us, as well as for other portions of the Church. We may and ought to allege it, however our sins and the sins of our fathers may cause us to allege it with doubt and trembling,

As to greater apparent holiness in one region of the Church than in another: in the first place, it is a comparison for which no mortal faculties are adequate: and next, it seems to have been the very snare of the Donatists, to think they could measure Church privileges by the worthiness either of Ministers or Communicants. Not to mention, that in this case there are obvious appearances one way as well as another. So that in regard of this note, we are still left in the uncertainty which our Lord's rule would seem to exclude.

But we may go a step further in this argument.

Even if it were granted, for argument's sake, that some other portion of the Church is abstractedly better than our own, has surer marks of life and reality in it : are we quite sure that men's passing over to it would not involve them in the moral guilt of schism, though wanting perhaps the formal nature of a schismatical act? Men well disciplined in Church principles account it schismatical to withdraw on such motives from the congregation of which they are locally members. St. Paul called it schism, when comparisons were but made, and party distinctions invented between himself, St. Peter, and Apollos. Nay, the very Name of Christ, he warns us, may be used in a schismatical tone. Undoubtedly it is so, when any one section of the true Church calls itself Christian, Catholic, Evangelical, or the like, to the exclusion of the rest. A zealous Apostle once did something of the kind, and received the memorable reproof, "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is on our part." Whatever other application those words may or may not bear, they seem to fall in remarkably with the present separations in the Catholic Church. They teach us not to deny the miracles and mighty works of the Gospel to those who are by no means against us, though for a time they are not visibly following in the same company with us.

Yet this is virtually done by individuals, as far as in them lies, when they pass from one section of

the Catholic Church to another. Forsaking the guide of their youth, the Church of their baptism, on the ground of her not seeming to supply their spiritual wants, they do in a manner excommunicate and unchurch her.

Yet nature herself surely teaches us as much as this: that we ought to be slow to believe evil and great imperfection of the Church of our baptism: and that to whatever extent such belief is forced on us by considerations which we cannot dutifully avoid, yet we should set our hearts stedfastly to abide by her, as long as there is any hope that she is a Church.

It may be replied, that after all no particular or national Church is, properly speaking, a Christian's spiritual mother: that the heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of us all, is Christ's Holy Catholic Church, one and the same in all countries, and to her alone we owe true filial allegiance. Suppose this were granted; yet so far as one's own Church is distinguishable from the Church Universal, she is not surely a stranger, but a nurse, honoured with the mother's confidence, and imbued with her spirit. And have we no duty to the foster-parent, who has fed us all our lives long unto this day? Are we not bound to respect her wishes, and to consult her peace and welfare, in all matters otherwise indifferent? in all doubtful matters to understand and interpret her sayings according to the known mind and will of our common mother, and to deal

reverentially with her very failures and imperfections, should there be any, which duty may at any time compel us to notice?

Let us remember Who it was that would not permit even a solemn vow to the Almighty to supersede the duty of succouring our earthly parents, and what a severe judgment He passed on those who said "Corban," to excuse themselves from any instance of filial respect. We have need to be constantly on our guard, that we draw not on ourselves any portion of this reproof, by failing in dutifulness to this our nursing-mother, under plea of exclusive regard to the one Holy Catholic Church. It is one of the points by which we are to try our Catholicity, whether it be real, or merely a thing of taste and imagination: whether at the bottom we be seeking our own things, or the things that be Jesus Christ's.

Above all, there is one consideration, which should be present day and night to the minds of those who feel any tendency to change: to change, I say, in any direction whatever, provided they have but a reasonable hope that they are already in the Church. The consideration I mean is a very obvious one, but I fear not often duly realized. It is this: that the evils of our present religious condition, be they what they may, (excepting, of course, such as we have brought on ourselves by wilful disobedience,) were none of our own choosing. We are not, therefore, responsible for them, any

further than as each in his station may have neglected providential helps to discern and amend them. But the evils of a man's new profession, should he take on him to choose for himself, will be his by a very peculiar kind of responsibility. He will be deliberately preferring that, which in the very communion to which he resorts had never perhaps been quite voluntarily chosen, but had been the silent and half-unnoticed growth of ages, and which even now, it may be, is rather tolerated than taught. But those who go out of their way to yoke themselves to the mischief, must be content to bear the whole burthen of it.

In this view it seems a providential circumstance, that the very forms which are said to be in use when English Catholics conform to the Church of Rome, are such as to bring before the mind the thought of many (to say the least) questionable things, which they by so conforming make entirely their own. Image-worship, for example, and the worship of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints are presented to the convert for his express sanction; and of course he is understood to sanction them, such as they avowedly exist, and are encouraged in that Church. Otherwise the mentioning them at all is either nugatory or deceptive. This seems as if it were overruled to be a warning to all in danger of taking such a step, that they reflect well on all its particulars, before they venture on it. Whoever at any time shall be so tempted, it will

be well for him to make special prayer, that by a strong effort he may be enabled to throw his mind a little onward, and imagine the position in which he will soon find himself, should he fail to break the spell which is more or less upon him. Now, it may be, without any direct fault of his, he has the pain of doubting whether his Church be not in schism :—what if he should by and by find himself at least as near to idolatry, and be aware that it is his own doing? What if the practical corruptions, questionable theoretical claims, and peremptory anathemas of his new Communion, bring him back before long to as sorrowful a feeling as at first, of the decayed and disunited condition of the whole Church; aggravated by the consciousness, that at such a time he has been seeking great things for himself, and has little regarded the consequences to his brethren. Such persons must expect to feel, and justly, as if they were themselves in part answerable for every thing painful in divine Service, or in the ordinances of the Church which they have chosen, and will wish themselves, possibly, back again, where they might at least have protested with more or less effect against irregularities and deficiencies.

Nor ought people to leave out of their anticipations the too certain results of such violent changes on the side which is forsaken. As far as the example goes, men generally are perplexed and unsettled. A kind of practical scepticism is

encouraged, and a disposition to think and speak lightly of all religion. Many more minds are brought to doubt and pain by the mere hearing of such changes, than are comforted and established by the self-denial which may accompany them. And they greatly tend to cherish mutual bitterness between the divided portions of the Church, and to make void her constant hearty prayer for unity.

Sad illustrations of this view might be gleaned, I apprehend, from the records of Church History. Is there one single instance, since the heat of the Reformation was over, of any person passing from the English to any other Church, (one might perhaps add, from any other to the English,) and afterwards becoming at all remarkable for sanctity? On the other hand, there are, we know, fearful examples of the final results of a man's encouraging in himself that craving of mind which commonly leads to such conversions. We almost seem to discern an intended token of the will of the Most High, that in this as in other respects every person, wherein he is called, therein should abide with God.

May we not conclude with some certainty, that of the three great Communities, which have the Creeds, the Succession, and the Sacraments, neither one is out of the Church? And therefore instead of proselyting in a spirit of hostility, their business is to reform themselves, and pray that

in God's good time they may be reunited in visible communion.⁸

It is of course to be expected, as long as the separation continues, that one branch should excel in one respect, another in another, and that in each there should always be found some individuals, whose natural tone and cast of mind would lead them to sympathize with one or other of the foreign branches, rather than with their own. It were perhaps the part of wisdom and charity, rather to bear with such persons, and make use of them to supply our own defects, than to vex and smite them as disloyal and unfaithful children.

As for themselves, their part clearly is, to use their particular position as a mode vouchsafed to them of taking up their Cross. They must learn in respect of Church privileges, assurances, and comforts, what we have all learned in respect of the more ordinary enjoyments of life: "Not to covet nor desire other men's goods, but to learn and labour truly to get their own living, and do their duty in that part of the Church, to which it has pleased God to call them."

We have great examples to encourage us in this particular sort of resignation: I mean, under religious difficulties. Daniel in the Captivity sought no great things for himself, but simply mourned and fasted over Jerusalem in ruins; and which of all the Saints of the Old Testament had such angelical visitations, or such high and express personal promises, as he had? Our own Bishop Ken,

though in a manner cast out of the Church of his baptism, would not wander from it, but abode by its door: and it is not surely too much to say, God's blessing visibly rested upon him, more than on any of those whom we read of as having given way to the temptation of seeking something more perfect.

May it be our lot to die, as he wished and prayed to do, in virtual Communion with the One Catholic Church, East and West, as before its separation: and may our earnest of such death be our visible Communion with the Church of England, such as he understood it to be! But if we would ensure so great a blessing, our preparation must be like his: the not seeking great things for ourselves, but simply obeying the prophetic voice: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." If on the other hand we will still be seeking excitements and sensible consolations, clearness of sight and certainty of assurance, beyond what is suitable for sinners in a fallen state of the Church, then whatever mercy may be in store for us at last, we may read, I suppose, our great responsibility and danger in the subsequent words of the Prophet: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled: this shall ye have of mine hand: ye shall lie down in sorrow."

S E R M O N X I I I . ^a

THE DUTY OF HOPING AGAINST HOPE.

ROM. iv. 18.

Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

THIS sentence, "hoping against hope," has from the beginning been a kind of watchword in the camp and city of the Great King; a sentence inscribed, as one may say, upon the wayside crosses, which are set as marks here and there on either hand of the road to the heavenly Jerusalem. It is, in a certain sense, more than faith; for faith, simply taken, only goes beyond what we see; but this hope goes against it also.

Hope, such as Abraham had, such as St. Paul here describes, is an actual throwing off and mastering the impression of importunate present evils.

^a Preached in the Chapel of Harrow Weald, Middlesex, on Wednesday, July 1, 1846, on laying the foundation of a new Church, and opening a new School.

It lifts and buoys up the whole man towards the good which faith only discerns. It not only realises, but appropriates the unseen good. It is, therefore, both a more immediate spring of action, and, as recognising God's unchangeable goodness, more intimately tied to love, the "end of the commandment" and "the bond of all perfectness."

And when Scripture speaks of "hoping against hope," or, in kindred phrase, of "glorying" and "rejoicing in tribulations," let us not imagine that it contemplates external and temporal difficulties only. The history, indeed, of the Old Testament turns our attention chiefly to these; and there is no doubt that in all times, and under all dispensations, pain, and loss, and bereavement, and ill usage, and the other calamities of social and bodily life, have been a great field and nursery for saintly hope. Still, we are warranted in believing that those outward trials were typical of our spiritual ones; and we know, moreover, by the Psalms and Prophets, by the Prophet Jeremiah especially, what deep misgivings, what chilling desolation of heart, what sense of desertion, and loneliness, and labour in vain, they had to contend against,—what temptations to sloth or despondency, as if the Law and the promises had failed.

This, however, it may be thought, was no more than one might reasonably look for, so long as God's people had with them but the shadow only of His supernatural kingdom and presence. But

when the substance should come, it might be expected that His people would no longer be tried in the same way; hoping would no more be an effort against hope, rather it would be the natural element in which the regenerate soul might live undisturbed, and go on from strength to strength. So the sanguine heart might imagine; and might seem to find encouragement in doing so, every where almost in the old Prophets. But the reality, we know, was far otherwise. As it pleased our Almighty Redeemer Himself to be a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, in this respect as much as in any; that His earthly life was throughout, humanly speaking, a life of disappointment,—so it has ever been with His Church. The outward and visible appearance of things has always, on the whole, been against her. Her time on earth is a time of crosses, even apart from persecution and direct hostility. Looking at the whole comprehensively, and weighing one thing against another, we may truly say she has had constant experience of hopes frustrated and expectations cut off. Think of our Lord weeping over Jerusalem; think of “the number of the names together” being “about an hundred and twenty;” think of St. Paul, without rest in his spirit, fears within, as well as fightings without; and consider whether the citizens of the heavenly kingdom have not had, from the very beginning, notice sufficient that anxiety, doubt, and disappointment, regarding the

spiritual good of themselves and others, would continue to be in great measure the very air they would have to breathe. The word spoken of the father of the faithful, "against hope believing in hope," and transferred by the Apostle as a kind of password from him to the Church, his spiritual seed;—have we any right to complain if that word is still visibly fulfilled in our time; if after that men, as men, have done their best, all that we see remains yet very unsatisfactory, the air around us full of confusion, mistrust, and perplexity; "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which" appear to be "coming on the earth?" Come what will of that kind, as we too deeply feel that we have deserved it all, and worse; so, if we read thoughtfully, we cannot deny that we have had ample warning of it, in the New Testament as well as in the Old.

I do not say that the tones of disappointment, still less that those of perplexity and doubt, are by any means the most prevailing in the voice of Christian antiquity. As the mass of external trials was greater, more universal, and more overwhelming; as miracles, and visions, and martyrdoms, and miraculous instances of visible sanctity, were vouchsafed to the Church more abundantly, to sustain her in the conflict;—there was, of course, the less room for doubt and wavering what to believe, or with whom to communicate; men's duty was plain, if they had but strength to do it; and when pas-

tors were disappointed, it was rather in the way of direct apostacy than in the practical failure of good principles still professed. But it is very observable, that in all instances, as soon as persecution is relaxed, the other sort of complaint begins ; and I do not suppose that it would be hard to trace, along a chain of Fathers quite back to the companions of the Apostles, the old complaint, "To what times, O Lord, hast Thou reserved me!" In a word, the perplexity inseparable from tendencies to disunion and from practical unbelief, is no new thing in the Church ; more or less, it has accompanied her all along. How should it be otherwise, since even in the regenerate the evil mind of the flesh remains ? And perhaps it would not be too rash a saying, were one to suggest, that a claim to be free from all this, whenever and wheresoever found, is a suspicious rather than an attractive circumstance : as, in medicine, wise men look coldly on remedies which profess to be quite perfect and infallible. In fact, such a claim appears in some degree to deprive Christ's people, in ordinary times, of one of their most salutary trials. Where we have infallible assurance, no perplexity or misgiving at all, there, it would seem, can be no room for "hoping against hope," no opportunity of patiently enduring, and of so being "blessed, with faithful Abraham."

Even if such doubtfulness be not a condition of our earthly being altogether, have we not some

reason to apprehend that we may have incurred it (so far as we may be suffering from it) personally, nationally, or ecclesiastically, for our many sins? If so, our only course must be to behave ourselves patiently under it, caring for this above all, that we make it not an excuse, either consciously or unconsciously, for slothfulness or neglect of known duties.

We know what the rule of the ancient saints was, when they suffered, were it more or less frequently, from painful doubt about their own condition. "Against hope" they "believed in hope," that the promises of God might be fulfilled in them; they endeavouring to do their plain duties, and leaving the rest to Him. That which passed in all their hearts may be understood by the recorded experience of one of them, familiar, no doubt, to many who now hear me :

"When one that was in anxiety of mind, often wavering between fear and hope, did once, being oppressed with grief, humbly prostrate himself in a Church before the altar in prayer, and said within himself, 'Oh, if I knew that I should yet persevere!' he presently heard within him an answer from God, which said, 'What if thou didst know it? What wouldest thou do? Do now what thou wouldest do then, and thou shalt be secure.' And being herewith comforted and strengthened, he committed himself wholly to the will of God, and that noisome anxiety ceased, neither had he any

mind to search curiously any farther to know what should befall him, but rather laboured to understand what was the perfect and acceptable will of God for the beginning and accomplishing of every good work."

This saying, well considered, will appear equally applicable to other kinds of spiritual misgiving—to doubts about truth of doctrine and reality of Church communion, as well as to perplexity and want of assurance concerning a man's own personal salvation. We may understand the heavenly voice as saying, "What if thou didst see clearly the theological grounds of this or that mysterious proposition, this or that article of the Creed? What wouldest thou do? Do the same now, and thou wilt be right." In like manner, had that ancient saint come to know of any Christian whose heart Providence permitted to be troubled with doubtings, whether he were truly or no a member of Christ's body; may we not imagine him, in his deep charity, repeating those comfortable words, "Do now what thou wouldest do, hadst thou no doubt at all of thy being within the pale of God's grace, and by that grace thou shalt be secure."

Thus, whatever our spiritual anxieties may be, the God of our father Abraham has from the beginning provided us with a sure remedy: not to distrust the grace of our baptism, but to use it in faith and hope. And this holds in respect of others quite as much as in respect of ourselves.

Where God's Providence empowers and calls on us to be instrumental in doing good to the souls of our brethren, we are not to draw back and say, "It is impossible; they are past help, there is nothing at all to be done." We are not to behave as though the grace of their regeneration were clean dried up, the sign of the cross worn entirely out of their foreheads. Against all human hope and expectation, we are to believe with a divine and Christian hope, that our feeble endeavours and prayers may, sooner or later, by His miraculous mercy, be rewarded with many souls: as Abraham in his weak old age became "the father of many nations." We are not to set limits to His ever-bountiful returns, but, according to the measure of the gifts which He has given us, we are in all cheerfulness to venture all, hope for all, but expect to see nothing.

And this so much the more, as we feel ourselves, either as a nation or as individuals, to be strictly and properly in the station of penitents. Surely it is enough and far too much, it is overflowing mercy, for such as we are, to be allowed to do any the least work in the house of our God, merely but to lift a hand or to breathe a prayer in the holy and blessed cause of the Church, which is His body. Surely it were presumption in us to look to behold the fruit of our labours, when even our Lord and Saviour waited long before He could see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And

as to present satisfaction and comfort, if we can have but a reasonable hope that we are, on the whole, in a right path, let us thank God, and ask no more.

It is obvious how these principles apply to the occasion of our present meeting. When we leave this sacred place, we shall proceed, God permitting, to lay the foundation-stone of a new Church, and that being done, to open for the first time a new School, to be carried on under high and strict rules; both ceremonies to be accompanied with solemn prayers and benedictions, and both, in the general design, not without sanction of sufficient authority, in the name and on the behalf of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

At any time, and under any circumstances, such efforts are real and deep trials to those who undertake them. If we venture so immediately on putting our hand to God's work, we had need begin with special preparation of heart; neither can we go on without special prayer and intercession. So it is in any case. But in this country and at this time, what reasons there are to make our prayers more than usually anxious and earnest, we are all more or less aware. Our consciences within, and our experience all around, tell us a sad and heart-breaking tale of blessings forfeited, privileges wasted, irreverence, self-will, unbelief, sensuality indulged, until the very trace and outline of God's city seems nearly worn away from among

us. But we know also and believe in our hearts—(may He confirm and increase our faith!)—that in the Church-system, as contained in the Prayer-Book, had we but the will and the strength to use it, we possess the remedy for this sad state of things.

And here, to allay possible misgivings, I will say in a word what I mean by the sufficiency of our Church-system. I mean :

First, That we believe ourselves, since our baptism, to be in a high and supernatural state, analogous to that in which the Israelites were of old, only infinitely higher and nearer to God, as depending on our real union with God the Son made Man, and therefore infinitely more blessed on the one hand, more dangerous on the other. I mean :

Secondly, That the sacraments, and prayers, and discipline of the Church, administered by apostolical authority, are God's ordained outward means for keeping us in this condition, and ensuring to us the blessings of it.

And thirdly, I mean : That in our Prayer-Book, supposing it really and fully obeyed, He, of His undeserved mercy, has sufficiently provided for each one of us those sacraments, prayers, and discipline.

This, in rough outline, being supposed the true notion of the system in which our lot is cast ; a Church and School, to be conducted accordingly,

must be scrupulously conformed in all things to the mind and meaning of the Prayer-Book. And if in any respect that has been mistaken or overlooked, we must humbly and charitably endeavour to supply the defect. Evidently, then, so far, we are making a venture, we are trying an experiment; so much the more anxious and exciting is the work which we are setting about, and our need is proportionately increased of a stedfast, humble resolution, like that of Abraham, and of hope believing against hope.

God in His great mercy has given us saintly examples and Scripture promises: unworthy as we are, we may venture on, we may disregard our own doubts and misgivings; we need not look back, now that we have been permitted once to put our hands to His plough.

Besides, (and here I desire especially to speak with all seriousness, both to those who are more immediately engaged in sacred undertakings, and to others who, like myself, are but lookers-on in comparison,) Abraham's watchword, "hoping against hope," is God's warning to us not to expect to see or feel here on earth, and in our own lifetime, the good effect of our undertakings in His cause. There is a very dangerous and subtle snare of the Evil One, apt to beset men in times like ours: I mean, our being tempted to put all or a great deal upon the providential issue of some one project or experiment; upon the line taken by this

or that individual or set of persons. Whereby we bring on ourselves almost certainly the peril either of sloth or of over-confidence; our own self-will in either case counterfeiting the voice of a directing angel. Remember what people they were who were always seeking after signs, and what the event was. Would it not be a safe rule, to take care first that all our undertakings be in accordance with the spirit of our Prayer-Book, and then commit them to God, in faith, hope, and penitence: resolving beforehand that we will not be greatly moved by the mere event either way; that neither seeming failure shall make us remorseful about what we really did for the best, nor yet (which would be still more lamentable) shall present success lift us up, and set us on thinking ourselves to be somewhat?

Further: we must "hope against hope," not in our first beginnings only, and in respect of our general plans, but afterwards also, in every minute detail of them. The longer we live, the more plainly shall we learn, that in no other temper would our Maker have us deal with His free though fallen creatures, the souls of our brethren.

To take a very familiar and obvious instance: who knows not that, even in the material fabric and arrangements of every new or restored Church, many things are sure to turn out, after the very best consideration, quite differently from what was intended and hoped? And if we do not previously

make up our minds to this, how certainly will the good work turn, more or less, to discontent and discouragement!

Again: no one can say beforehand what will be the immediate visible effect even of the wisest and most dutiful arrangements for the ordering of Church-services; how they will strike the minds of the people; whether those whom we design to train in them will walk worthy of them, or no. Shall we therefore be disheartened, if our efforts in that way seem for a while to bear no fruit? Shall we cease caring for such things, and say, "It is all of no use?" Nay, "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain:" and shall not Christ's servants do as much for that seed, which, for aught they know, will spring up and bear good fruit in eternity? O, my brethren, "be patient; stablish your hearts; the coming of the Lord draweth nigh:" and until then, it is the very law of our being to "walk by faith, not by sight."

Let us go on in thought from our Church to our School, and consider the special intention of it. There we shall perceive still greater need of being prepared with patient hearts to encounter any degree of seeming failure, by how much the work intended is of a newer and more untried cast. For, as most of my hearers are of course aware, there is a special object in this institution,

over and above that which is common to all Christian Schools. We hope and pray, that from this day forward this place may begin to be a nursery, not only of sincere Christians, but of Christians willing and able to serve the Church of God, at home or abroad, in her roughest and barest paths of duty: and it is obvious that to this end they must be trained to endure hardness, to love the poor and low places of the earth, to give up their own wills, more unreservedly than is expected, in a common way, even of those who are most carefully brought up in our Church. So far, then, those who are engaged in it seem to be making a sort of venture; to be entering on a course of which hitherto their eyes have seen little, however long and deeply their hearts may have mused upon it. God be with them! God forbid that a single word or tone should be uttered to discourage their devout, their dutiful, their charitable work! But it will not be discouragement, it will be cheerfulness and hope in the end, if they now say in their hearts, "O Lord, we commit our work to Thee: we know not what the end of it may prove; but take it, we beseech Thee, into Thine own hands. Prepare us, from beginning to end of it, for what Thy Providence shall bring forth."

Or it may be well to remember the prayer of Moses, and, knowing as we do our own utter unworthiness, and fearing above all things the pride

of apparent success, to beseech God, so far as we may lawfully choose, not to let us see much of the fruit of our labours in this world: "Shew Thy servants Thy work;" teach them what to do in Thy cause,—“and their children Thy glory:” may the next age see the result. We know not what is success, and what failure; we only know that it must be good to do and suffer all Thy will.

Far better, surely, for each one of us to spend all his life in so praying and labouring, than to have present joy of his labours, along with such confidence as is apt to be engendered by the consciousness of satisfying and influencing others. And in the end, depend on it, far better for the Church itself, though we may not understand how.

Some of the greatest advances in perfection have been granted to God's family in this manner; by the after-growth of sayings and examples which seemed at first to have been utterly thrown away. Our Lord's saying to the rich young man did but send him away sorrowful; but within a few months, hundreds in Jerusalem remembered and obeyed it, bringing their goods, and laying them at the Apostles' feet. Some centuries afterwards, the same saying fell accidentally (as men speak) on the eye of another rich young man, and he presently sold all that he had, took up the cross, and became a prime pattern of the strictest way of life in the Church: and all generations honour him by the name of St. Antony. Not long after, the memory

of his example moved yet another young man to do that which ended in his embracing a religious life in like manner; and this was no other than the great St. Augustine.

Thus the happiest results may ensue from persons not thinking at all of results, but simply and unreservedly trying to do what will be most acceptable to God.

In this spirit let us endeavour to begin and end all our prayers and works. Having weighed probable consequences, so far as charity requires, (for to do so is one condition of knowing God's will,) and having once made up our minds, let us thenceforth dismiss from our hearts all anxious longing to *see* the good we may be doing.

What if we made this the special grace to be asked for at the Altar of God, the next time He shall permit us to draw near it? as no doubt we shall then feel it our duty to offer up special intercession for this Church and School.

The season upon which this work has providentially fallen is full of encouragement to such intercession, full of motives for self-denying hope. For this is the seventh day from the birth of St. John the Baptist, and to-morrow, being the octave of his birth, is marked by the Church as the day of the Visitation of the blessed Virgin Mary; the day, probably, on which she ended her long visit to her cousin Elisabeth, and set her face homewards, to prepare for the greater and more

mysterious blessing which awaited herself. Our thoughts accordingly are now carried back to the Virgin Mother, the type of Christ's Holy Church, blessing with her presence and prayer the birth and the childhood of him who was to make ready the way of Jesus Christ: and may we not, without presuming too far, accept this as a gracious token of a blessing on the two undertakings which this day has brought together? Our Mother, the Church, we hope is with us in laying our foundation-stone: may we not hope that she will be with us also when our School-doors shall be opened; that an answer may be vouchsafed to her prayers, like to that which crowned the intercessions made for St. John; that the children with whom God shall entrust us here may "grow" and "wax strong in spirit," and abide thankfully in holy retirement and self-denial, until it please God to "shew them to Israel," by calling them to their several employments in His Church; and that they may then go forth, each in His station, turning men's hearts to the Lord against His second coming?

Finally: if any man's conscience reproach him, as being hitherto a mere looker-on in pious and dutiful undertakings, much more as having by wilful sin done his part towards making them void, let the fruit of that reasonable shame appear now in his works, by true amendment, and by his making some venture for Christ's sake: ever so little will be better than none at all. And

may those whom God permits to come nearer, and to be forward in good works, remember those at a distance in their solemn intercessions. So may we all go on, for ourselves and for our brethren, “against hope believing in hope:” and all that is heart-breaking here—perplexity, disappointment, disunion—shall become, by His blessing, helps to patience, and therefore means of true peace and joy.

NOTE.

It may be well to subjoin here the “Rules of the College of St. Andrew, Harrow Weald:” which is the Institution referred to in the Sermon.

FOR GOD, THE CHURCH, AND CHRIST’S POOR.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good-will towards men.

1. This School is begun in the Name of the ever-blessed TRINITY, for the benefit of the Poor of Christ’s Holy Catholic Church.

2. All who are Members of it shall in all things obey and serve, to the best of their power, Christ’s Holy Catholic Church, and the Bishops and Governors placed over them by her; and shall daily attend her Services, and observe her appointed seasons of Fast and Festival.

3. The Scholars shall in all things strictly obey the Superiors placed over them in this College, since we are told “to obey them that have rule over us.”

4. The Scholars shall attend and assist in all Ministrations of the Church, in which the Priest may find his need of them: such as attending him in the performance of the Marriage or Burial Services, and in other ways aiding his Ministrations:

5. The Scholars shall devote a portion of each day to the relief of Christ's Poor, and those afflicted by God with sickness, by carrying food to their respective houses, and waiting on them when they are the guests of the College: they being "blessed who provide for the sick and needy."

6. The Poor, Widows, Orphans, and all friendless and destitute persons, shall be liberally provided with such help as they need from the College, and shall at least twice in each week dine at the College-table: the selection being made by the Superiors under authority, since "inasmuch as we do it unto the least of them, we do it unto Christ."

7. The Scholars will devote a portion of each day to the attaining such knowledge as shall fit them to be useful and faithful members of the Holy Church of which they are children, and to whom they are devoted for life and for death. The divisions of such work shall be as the Superiors shall direct, between learning from good books, the care of cattle, and the tillage of the ground, as hereafter described.

8. The Scholars shall especially observe rules of devotion and reverence in their respective Bedrooms, they being the places wherein they approach God in prayer, wherein they pass the perilous hours of darkness and helpless sleep, wherein also they may some day pass through their last sickness and the gate of death.

9. The Scholars shall be reminded of their various duties at their respective seasons by the ringing of the College-Bell, the call of which they shall watchfully and punctually obey at all times, it being the likeness of that call we must one day all attend.

10. The Scholars shall solemnly observe the appointed hours of devotion, at Morning, Noontide, and Evening, and shall reverently observe the striking of the hours, seeing how quickly time is passing away and eternity coming on.

11. The Scholars shall rise early, and be active in their appointed works throughout the day; watchfulness and industry being the duty of all Christian People and faithful Sons of the Church; sloth and idleness the doors to all evil spirits.

12. The Scholars shall specially observe a respectful and reverential manner to all their Superiors and Betters, the Poor,

the Aged, and those afflicted by God's Providence, "not answering again."

13. The Scholars shall be very careful to observe cleanliness in person and dress, it being a likeness of inward purity.

14. The Scholars shall each have his own respective work, for the care and well-being of the College, in the tending of cattle, cultivating the soil, and carrying on the other works of the College, as they shall be directed; and that cheerfully and with alacrity, without jealousy and discontent, counting it joy to have their work appointed to them, since we are all ignorant of what is for our own good.

15. The Scholars shall strictly observe all hours, seasons, and bounds of places appointed by their Superiors, and shall be careful to appear in the dress of the College.

16. The Scholars shall pay deference and attention to the four Head Boys, who are bound, with God's help, to be themselves patterns and examples, "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," for the glory of GOD and CHRIST'S HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH and the BROTHERHOOD to which they belong.

*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give
the glory, for Thy mercy and Thy truth's sake.*

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE

SERMON ON TRADITION,

TRADITION is a word of so vague use, and so closely associated, in most men's minds, with a whole host of partialities and antipathies, that it were chimerical to think of escaping objections, though a person's view on the subject were much clearer and more accurate than the author of the Sermon professes to have attained. This consideration ought *in limine* to check any thought of bitterness, such as is apt to spring up in a writer's mind, when he finds himself charged with opinions which he knows he never held, and believes he never expressed: and at the same time it may console him under the fear, which he must more or less experience, lest something incautious or negligent in his way of writing may have led to such misrepresentation, and so may have injured what he conscientiously believes to be a most important and sacred cause. As it is, he may perhaps be excused for waiving any detailed notice of the censures with which the Sermon has been visited; not out of any disrespect to their authors, but under the sincere conviction, that the subsequent remarks, if duly followed up, will explain and justify, to considerate persons, whatever may have appeared questionable in the original argument.

On a general view of what he has read and heard in opposition to the idea of Church Tradition here enforced, he finds matter, *first*, for serious protest on his own behalf, and, *secondly*, for serious caution to all who approach that subject.

I. 1. He is principally anxious to remove any impression which may exist of his wishing to recommend a new theory, a rule of faith devised for present occasions, by any particular school of divines, now or at any former time. On the contrary, he is persuaded, that what he is endeavouring to inculcate is no other than the very rule of the Church of England, as distinguished on the one hand from Roman usurpation, on the other from rationalistic licentiousness. And in support of this persuasion he appeals to that array of standard English Divines, whose views concerning Tradition are exhibited under the title of *Catena Patrum*, in the *Tracts for the Times*, No. 78: which Tract was subjoined to some former editions of this Sermon. If he err in his estimate of the spirit of the English Church, it will appear, he trusts, by those extracts, that at least his error was not of his own invention—that he has both high and ancient authority for it.

With this reference the topic of novelty might be dismissed; but there is one great name occurring in the *Catena*, to the benefit of which some may deny that the argument has a full right: and as there are appearances to the contrary, a few words may be allowed in explanation. The name meant is that of Bishop Jeremy Taylor; in one of whose latest Sermons, a Sermon addressed to his Clergy during his Episcopate, the following occurs among the rules for securing incorruption of doctrine:

“ Next to this analogy or proportion of faith, let the consent of the Catholic Church be your measure, so as by

no means to prevaricate in any doctrine, in which all Christians always have consented. This will appear to be a necessary rule by and by; but in the mean time I shall observe to you, that it will be the safer, because it cannot go far; it can be instanced but in three things, in the *Creed*, in *ecclesiastical government*, and in external *forms of worship and liturgy*. The Catholic Church hath been too much and too soon divided: it hath been used as the man upon a hill used his heap of heads in a basket; when he threw them down the hill, every head ran his own way, 'quot capita tot sententiæ;' and as soon as the spirit of truth was opposed by the spirit of error, the spirit of peace was disordered by the spirit of division; and the Spirit of God hath overpowered us so far, that we are only fallen out about that, of which if we had been ignorant, we had not been much the worse; but in things simply necessary, God hath preserved us still unbroken; all nations and all ages recite the Creed, and all pray the Lord's Prayer, and all pretend to walk by the rule of the Commandments, and all Churches have ever kept the day of Christ's resurrection or the LORD's day holy; and all Churches have been governed by Bishops, and the rites of Christianity have been for ever administered by separate orders of men, and those men have been always set apart by prayer and the imposition of the Bishop's hand; and all Christians have been baptized, and all baptized persons were, or ought to be, and were taught that they should be, confirmed by the Bishop, and presidents of religion; and for ever there were public forms of prayer, more or less, in all Churches; and all Christians that were to enter into holy wedlock were ever joined or blessed by the Bishop or the Priest: in these things all Christians have ever consented, and *he that shall prophesy or expound Scripture to the prejudice of any of these things, hath no part in that article of his Creed; he*

does not believe the holy Catholic Church, he hath no fellowship, no communion with the saints and servants of GOD^a.”

In the *Dissuasive from Popery*, a work of the same date, he says, “The great use of the Fathers, especially of the first three hundred years, is to tell us what was first, to consign Scripture to us, to convey the Creed, with simplicity and purity to preach Christ’s Gospel, to declare what is necessary and what not^b.” . . . Again, in the *Ductor Dubitantium*, “There is yet one more use of Tradition, but it is in rituals. . . . Such are, 1. The observation of the Lord’s day, solemnly once a year, and less solemnly once a week; i. e. the feast of Easter, and the weekly Sunday. 2. The government of the Church by Bishops, which is consigned to us by a tradition greater than some books of Scripture, and as great as that of the Lord’s day; and that so notorious, that thunder is not more heard than this is seen in all the monuments of antiquity. 3. Offices ecclesiastical to be said and done by ecclesiastical persons; such as are, the public prayers of the Church, the consecration of the blessed Eucharist, the blessing of the married pairs and joining them in the holy and mysterious rite of marriage, the consecration of Bishops by Bishops only, &c. These three are the most universal and apostolical Traditions; which, although they have also great grounds in Scripture, yet because the universal practice and doctrine of the Church of GOD in all ages and in all Churches primitive is infinitely evident and notorious, less liable to exception, and an apt commentary upon the certain but less evident places of Scripture, therefore these may be placed under the protection of universal Tradition; for they really have it beyond all exception^c.”

^a Vol. vi. p. 520.

^b Vol. x. p. 312.

^c xiii. 118.

Passages of this kind (and many more might be adduced) would seem to shew, that when Bishop Taylor speaks in disparagement of Tradition, he means only such as the Church of Rome avouches: Tradition of the *substance* of doctrine, *independent of Scripture*, and *purporting to be of things necessary to salvation*. For the *form* of doctrine, i. e. for the Creed, or selection of fundamental articles; for *ritual* matters; and for *Church government*, he accounts it not only useful, but (morally and practically speaking) necessary. And he repeatedly and distinctly assigns the reason for the different degree of authority which he attributes to it in the two cases; viz. that in practical matters it may be verified, but in doctrinal (with the exception of the Creed) it cannot. If it could, his own statement is, it ought to be received on the same ground as the Scriptures, the distinction of written and spoken being but an accident^d.

Now in all this it will be difficult to shew in what instance Bishop Taylor's doctrine varies from that of the Sermon, except it be in these two particulars; which do not, it is conceived, affect the main argument: first, that the Sermon mentions *Interpretation of Scripture* as another possible field of genuine Tradition, besides those which Taylor has specified; and, secondly, that although Taylor, in a passage above cited, appears to make certain

^d x. 418. "Tradition signified either preaching or writing, as it happened. When it signified preaching, it was only the first way of communicating the religion of Jesus Christ; and until the Scriptures were written, and con-signed by the full testimony of the Apostles and apostolical Churches respectively, they, in questions of religion, usually appealed to Tradition." Then quoting the passage of St. Irenæus, which is cited in the Sermon, he adds, "That which was true then, is also true now; for, if the Apostles had never written at all, we must have followed Tradition; unless God had provided for us some better thing." Comp. p. 385.

traditional practices absolutely necessary to Church communion, yet in his *Ductor Dubitantium*, a work of an earlier date by a few years, he had followed up his mention of the same observances thus: "Whatever can descend to us and be observed in this channel, there is no sufficient reason to deny it to be apostolical; but then how far it can be obligatory to all ages and to all Churches will be another consideration^e." On comparing the two statements, it may be perhaps thought, that this great man, like his predecessor Hooker, as he grew older, became more convinced of the importance as well as genuineness of those portions of the Church system, which are most concerned in this controversy^f. And it may be observed, that any admission from him, apparently narrowing the terms of communion, comes to us with peculiar force; his tendency, as the *Liberty of Prophesying* shews, being quite the other way; indulgent and liberal (as many will judge) to a fault, and not well brooking the austere denunciations of some even of the primitive Creeds.

On the whole, we need not have much hesitation in adding the name of Bishop Taylor to the illustrious cloud of witnesses for Primitive Tradition, so conspicuous in English Theology.

^e xiii. 139.

^f "It is something in favour of Vincentius's rule, that it has been received, extolled, and acted upon, by such men as Ridley, Jewel, Grotius, Overal, Hammond, Beveridge, Bull, Hicks, Bramhall, Grabe, Cave, and our own Archbishop King; that it has been admitted expressly even by Chillingworth; and that it has been unreservedly acknowledged as a just and true guide, by Bishop Taylor, in one of his latest works, his Visitation Sermon at Connor; a tribute, this last, the more remarkable, because in his *Liberty of Prophesying*, and in his *Ductor Dubitantium*, he had spoken less respectfully of the principle, and his remarkable change of language can be accounted for only by his having undergone a correspondent change of sentiment. He had seen, felt, and weighed every difficulty; the result of all was, a deliberate persuasion that Vincentius was right, and that he himself had been wrong;" Bishop Jebb, *Letter liii.* in Forster's *Life*, ii. 249.

It is in behalf of their constant doctrine, and not of any modern invention, that the writer desires further to protest against certain undue assumptions, on which, as it appears to him, is based nearly the whole of the reasoning of the deniers of Primitive Tradition.

2. Because it is affirmed that the full Tradition of Christianity existed before the Christian Scriptures, and so far independent of them, we are charged with alleging two distinct systems or words of God, the one written, the other unwritten, running as it were parallel to each other quite down to our own time. But this, by the terms of the case, is plainly unwarranted. If a man were to say that the Severn and the Wye rise separately in the same mountain, one higher up than the other, must he therefore maintain that they never meet before they reach the sea? Tradition and Scripture were at first two streams flowing down from the mountain of God, but their waters presently became blended, and it were but a vain and unpractical inquiry, to call upon every one who drinks of them to say, how much of the healing draught came from one source, and how much from the other. On account of those who would poison the stream, it is necessary from time to time to analyse it, and shew that it contains no ingredients which were not to be found in one or other of the two fountains; and in so doing, it becomes incidentally manifest, at least in some measure, what portion each of the two has contributed to the general mass; it is manifest, for example, that all necessary *credenda*, all truths essential to salvation, are contained in the Scripture itself; and is it not equally manifest, that many helps of the greatest consequence, nay I will say generally necessary, to the right development and application of Scripture, are mostly if not entirely derivable from Tradition? And is it not a poor kind of reasoning to say, Tradition would have been

worthless had we been left to it alone, therefore it cannot be of any value, now that Scripture has been all along at hand, to check, to sustain, to interpret, to rectify it, as the several occasions might require? Yet this is the whole substance of many men's argumentation on the subject: they have argued against an imaginary case, instead of addressing themselves to the realities of Church history; and have thus given an advantage to Romanists on one side and Rationalists on the other, of which neither party has been slow to avail itself. Such is not the way of the English Church; she does not so violently sever the different parts of the constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven, but acknowledging Scripture as her written charter, and Tradition as the common law, whereby both the validity and practical meaning of that charter is ascertained, venerates both as inseparable members of one great providential system; without confounding their provinces, or opposing them to each other, in the manner of modern Rome. Why should it be thought a thing incredible, that persons should be found among her members and ministers desirous to follow, as God shall give them grace, in so plain, so reasonable, so moderate, so safe a way? Because they call attention to the fact, that "*Primitive Tradition* is recognised in Holy Scripture," as being, AT THAT TIME, of paramount authority; why should they be presently suspected of having a system of their own in reserve; a theory, like some parts of Romanism, *still* independent of Holy Scripture, and to be supported by *modern* traditions? more especially if they themselves are careful to declare and exemplify the use they wish to make of the fact in question; viz. to illustrate and enforce, by its aid, certain portions of *the existing Church System*, which they consider to be especially in danger.

3. I say, of *the existing Church System*, here in England:

for this is another point on which some protest seems to be required. It is sometimes assumed, that the traditions and practices, which the Sermon has most in view, are "obscure and obsolete;" and that where persons are called on to search in antiquity for genuine relics of the Apostles, "the question of course concerns those points which are not embodied in our own formularies." In assuming this, the fact is overlooked, that in the very page of the Sermon here referred to, the chief points in question are specified; "being such as these: the canon of Scripture; the full doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation; the oblation and consecration of the Eucharist; the Apostolical Succession;" to which, perhaps, it might have been well to add the doctrine of baptismal Regeneration. Surely it is not too much to say, that these points are "embodied in our own formularies;" and, if there be any of them about which the Clergy are unhappily not agreed, it is not too much to hope, that in so far as the right use of Tradition may clear up what is ambiguous, whether in those formularies or in Scripture itself, it may give some help towards bringing us to a better agreement. This is the very chiefest advantage which the warmest recommenders of Tradition in our Church expect from it; viz. that attention to it should very much elevate men's ideas of the existing system, proving it divine in many points where they now ignorantly suppose it human. This, and not the establishment of any mere theory, new or old, is the immediate object of those who have most earnestly urged, from time to time, the reverential study of Christian antiquity. Not that they would entirely shut out the hope of improvement in many respects: thankfully as they own that God has preserved to us all things on which the being of a Church depends, they yet feel that much is wanting—more, probably, than can ever be supplied—of

the perfect order and harmony of the apostolical age. Nor do they feel it any breach of fidelity to the Church of England, to join in the confession of one on whom she has ever prided herself, as among her truest children and chiefest ornaments :

“ The second temple could not reach the first,
And the late Reformation never durst
Compare with ancient times and purer years,
But, in the Church and us, deserveth tears.”

4. It may be well to protest, once for all, against the allegation so confidently repeated concerning the Sixth Article of the Church of England, that it was meant to set aside the claims of Primitive Tradition. To apprehend the drift of that Article exactly, it must be considered as chiefly intended for a guide to the Clergy : and will be found in that light exactly to correspond with the engagement in the Ordination and Consecration Services, to “ *teach* nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which we shall be persuaded may be *concluded* and *proved* by the Scripture ;” as being “ persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all *doctrine* required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.” A comparison of the two documents will tend to shew how carefully they are limited to matters of *doctrine, articles of faith, propositions, the belief* of which may be deemed fundamental and indispensable. Not that Scripture is not divinely perfect as a rule of life and manners also ; but the framers of the Article were not at the time turning their attention that way : they wished to be understood of necessary points of *faith, doctrinal* conditions of admission into Christ’s covenant. Observe the wording of that clause, where they compare the canonical with the apocryphal books. “ The other books the Church doth read *for*

example of life and instruction of manners, but yet doth not apply them to establish any doctrine."

Thus the Article leaves ample scope for the province, which, as we have seen, Bishop Taylor assigned principally to Tradition: practical rules relating to the Church of Christ. For any thing stated in the Article, such rules might be both divine, and generally necessary to salvation, and yet not be contained in Scripture; but the doctrines or propositions concerning them would not be necessary: it would be wrong to insert them as Articles of the Creed. For instance, St. Ignatius writes as follows^g: "Let that Eucharist be accounted valid which is under the Bishop, or some one commissioned by him." Wherein he lays down the rule, which we know was universally received in the Primitive Church, that consecration by apostolical authority is essential to the participation of the Eucharist, and so far generally necessary to salvation. Now supposing this could not be at all proved from Scripture, (as it may, in a great measure, to the satisfaction of unprejudiced minds,) still it might be accepted, on the above evidence, as a necessary rule of Church communion, without infringing on our Sixth Article: but it could not be turned into a proposition, and put into the Creed, because that would make not only the rule itself, as observed by the Church, but the knowledge of it also by the individual, necessary to salvation: and it may be thankfully admitted, that knowledge of the true nature of Sacraments is nowhere required in Holy Scripture^h, as a condition of our receiving the spiritual grace they impart.

^g *Ad Smyrn. c. viii.*

^h 1 Cor. xi. 29. is no exception to this; since *διακρίνων* means rather "reverent separation" (from common bread) than "accurate knowledge and discernment" in the modern sense. And compare the inspired narrative, St. Matth. ix. 20, &c.

Neither again does the Article say any thing derogatory to the divinely-appointed¹ use of Primitive Tradition, (i. e. of the Creeds of the Church,) in pointing out which among scriptural truths are fundamental, and ought to be made terms of communion: rather it implies an appeal to such Tradition, allowing, as it does expressly, that there may be fundamental truths, the premises whereof only are contained in Scripture, and not the very propositions themselves; which allowance would throw the terms of communion into no small uncertainty, were it not for the Article next but one directing attention especially to the three Creeds, as adequate to supply what the former Article had left wanting; and both together completing the rule of faith; the Creeds presenting the conclusions to be believed, the Scripture confirming them out of the mouth of God.

Moreover, the principle itself of the sufficiency of Scripture is mainly a traditional principle; although when once put in possession of it, we find it irresistibly confirmed by contemplation of the contents of the written Word. But on this subject it were presumptuous to do more than refer the reader to the masterly discussion by Mr. Newman, in the 11th, 12th, and 13th of his Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church. One question only shall be added. Do we not discern, on this hypothesis, a very beautiful and instructive harmony between the several provinces of evangelical teaching? the preliminary principle, the sufficiency of the written Word, being taught by Tradition and confirmed and illustrated by the Bible, just in the same way as the several doctrines are afterwards. And is not this analogy, as far as it goes, both a material confirmation of the general statement, and also an indication of the purpose of moral probation, which we may believe was one final cause of the whole arrange-

¹ Gal. i. 8.

ment; just as, under God's natural government, our probation is the more entire from the circumstance, that we receive our first impressions from Testimony, but must use Observation to confirm or correct them, and cannot long depend upon either quite alone.

Now since we are bound to receive the Articles in their literal and grammatical sense, this construction might be fairly maintained, whatever were the known sentiments of those who at first imposed them; but the argument for it becomes more forcible, when it is recollected that the same Convocation, which first enforced subscription on the Clergy, passed also the following Canon for the regulation of preaching throughout the kingdom: "That the Clergy shall be careful never to teach any thing from the pulpit, to be religiously held and believed by the people, but what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament, and collected out of that very same doctrine by the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops." This Canon, passed in 1571, under the auspices of Archbishop Parker, has been often quoted, (among others, repeatedly by Bishop Taylor^k), as expressing the genuine, permanent sense of the Anglican Church on the matters in question. And it seems fair and natural that it should be so quoted, as often as we are asked on what authority, and by whose warrant, our Clergy can be called upon to walk by the rule of primitive antiquity, rather than by their own private judgment.

5. As to any suspicion which may have arisen about limiting Primitive Tradition to mere formularies, and ministerial faithfulness to the investigation and custody of the traditional safeguards of faith only: such suspicion must vanish, of course, when it is once well understood, that the "depositum" so much insisted on *includes* to us the written Word, as in the first age it doubtless included

^k *Works*, x. 131, 322, 404.

the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Still, that in the first age there were Creeds and Catechisms, and that the apostolical writings sometimes allude to them, we may well take the liberty of believing : being strengthened in this interpretation by the witness of Bishop Taylor, who, speaking of the Apostles' Creed as "having been always in the Primitive Church esteemed a full and perfect digest of all the necessary and fundamental Articles of Christian religion^l," goes on to say : "St. Paul gave us the first formal intimation of this measure, in his advices to St. Timothy : 'Hold fast the form of sound words^m which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.' This was the *depositum* that St. Paul left with Timothy ; the *hypotyposis* or summary of Christian belief, the Christian Creed, which St. Paul opposes to the profane new talkings, and the disputations of pretended learning ; meaning that this symbol of faith is the thing on which all Christians are to rely, and this is the measure of their faith." Surely it were unfair, on account of such a sentence as this, to accuse Bishop Taylor of shutting up either the Apostles' teaching, or the trust committed to their successors, in one scanty form of words. It is not the form of words, but the substantial truths, which are meant, when people speak of our still having the Primitive Creed, and of its exclusive vital importance to the very being of the king-

^l x. 458.

^m Bishop Taylor here gives the interpretation of this phrase most approved among moderns. The turn given to it in the Sermon, p. 188, being rather different, it may be right just to mention the reasons of the difference ; which are, 1. The want of the definitive article in the Greek : ἔχε ὑποτύπωσιν, not ἔχε τὴν ὑ. 2. The mode of paraphrase adopted by the ancients, especially Chrysostom and Theodoret. Elsewhere Bishop Taylor expounds τύπον διδαχῆς in Rom. vi. 17. as conveying a like allusion. x. 129.

dom of heaven. Neither, should it appear at any time requisite to urge on the Clergy, as their paramount care, the integrity of doctrinal faith, is this necessarily any disparagement of practical religion, of pastoral vigilance, or of any other of their objects and duties.

II. Thus much by way of protecting the scriptural argument for Primitive Tradition against certain misapprehensions under which it appeared to labour. It may be well to add a few *cautionary* remarks, obvious enough, yet not always regarded by those who take an interest in this subject.

1. We should be careful that we are not, unknown to ourselves, expecting *demonstration*, where *practical proof* only is attainable, and ought to be sufficient. Somewhat of this error appears to lurk in those minds, which reject the notion of a rule of faith made up of Scripture and Tradition together, on the ground that Scripture is infallible, Tradition merely historical. They appear to reason as if there could be no faith without demonstrative infallible evidence. The truer statement surely would be, that such evidence, complete in all its parts, leaves no room for faith; and therefore we are no where left to such evidence alone. Is it not so, that in regard of those truths, the evidence whereof is most entirely scriptural, we are yet to depend on common historical proof both for the genuineness and the right interpretation of the text? And as the stream can rise no higher than the fountain, so our assent even to scriptural truths differs not from our assent to other well-attested historical propositions, so far as the kind of evidence is concerned. The great point in which it does differ is the deep feeling of awe and reverential attention with which it is naturally accompanied, from the very circumstance that God Himself, as we have reason to believe, is speaking from heaven to assure us of these

things. Now as far as we have reason to consider any traditional or ecclesiastical rule as being in effect the voice of God, so far we shall naturally treat it (the substance of it) with the same *kind* of reverence as we should treat both the substance and the very words of a text from the Bible. For instance, could we be once fully satisfied that the order of consecration of the Holy Eucharist, such as it is gathered out of the Primitive Liturgies, was established by the Apostles under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, we should be affected by it much as we are by the apostolical writings themselves; *i. e.* with reverence inferior only to that with which we regard our Lord's own words in the Gospel. Suppose we are not fully satisfied on the point, but only discern a strong probability, sufficient for a wise man to act on; yet surely we are bound, if circumstances allow, to act on it with all devotion: and our doing so will be an exercise of faith, and may humbly hope for the reward of faith. This instance may serve to shew, that the distinction alluded to is not valid, since on the one hand, scriptural evidence must always presuppose a foundation in that which is historical; and on the other hand, historical or traditional evidence may lead us back to a point so very near the Throne of God, as to require of us something of the same *kind* of feeling as if we heard Him speaking in Scripture.

2. Closely allied to this caution is another, too apt to be forgotten by both extremes in this controversy: Not to speak or argue as though we had any right, *a priori*, to expect full satisfaction and comfort here in our religious enquiries. Who are we, that *our* satisfaction, *our* comfort and ease of mind, should be the regulating point (if one may so call it) of the machinery of God's dispensations? the index whereby to determine in what measure and degree the Almighty shall have revealed Himself to His

creatures? Yet this is virtually premised, both in the schools of Rome, when they argue that there must be on earth an infallible judge of controversies, otherwise the Church will be left in comparative discomfort; and also by those Protestants who account Tradition inadmissible, because it is, as they judge, always more or less "uncertain and slippery;" who seem to think that nothing can be, practically, an object of faith, except what is "very distinct in character, clear in its credentials, well authenticated in its details;" and who consider it a sufficient objection to an account of a mystery, that it leaves the nature of the transaction dubious, and admits of no clear statement. Experience shews that there is too much danger, lest the enemy take advantage of this longing after completeness and clearness, to turn men aside, ingenious men especially, from the strait and narrow and sometimes broken way, towards some path of human framing, more enticing to such minds, because it seems distincter in its end, better defined and more continuous in its course. But clearness and symmetry of doctrine are a dear purchase, when Christian truth and duty must be impaired for their sake. After all, a fragment of the true Temple is worth all the palaces of modern philosophical theology.

One ill effect of the tone of mind just mentioned, and one which is very little suspected by the parties themselves, is this, that it sets them on limiting our enquiries and opinions more strictly than the Church does: they seem to themselves to move in such fulness of light, that they become after a time quite impatient to see others feeling their way, walking as in twilight, and betraying more or less uncertainty: they little suspect that, perhaps, all the while, they may be but "walking in the light of their own fire, and in the sparks which themselves have kindled," while the others may be gradually learning to

“trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon their God.” However, in the state of things which the holy Prophet here describes, those who seem to themselves illuminated become after a time, as was said, impatient of the caution and comparative timidity of the others, and are wont to interfere, more or less rudely, to force or frighten them into their own way. Is it not from some impression of this kind, that among the persons who are most averse to Tradition, on this express ground, that they require things to be distinct and certain, are those who would tie us down most strictly to the very letter of the Homilies? although it is most clear from the wording of the 35th Article, that the recommendation of them to the Church by authority was but general as to their substance, and bore express reference to that particular time°. Nay, and the matter has been carried so far as to demand rejection, at the hands of the Clergy, of all that is (not “inconsistent with,” but) “unauthorized by” the Thirty-nine Articles: as if the Articles were either a rule of faith, or a complete system of theology; as if they were in any sense conditions of lay communion; as if the Prayer Book added nothing to the declaration of the mind of the Church of England; or as if, on the other hand, it were impossible to urge any thing as vitally important, without setting it forth as a formal condition of Church communion, nay, even of final salvation.

3. But the cardinal point, on which, it would seem, all men require warning, from beginning to end of these discussions, is the *irreverent use of reason*. There is continual danger of our treating as profane what, for ought we know, may be sacred, though not as yet proved to be so; danger of slighting Divine mysteries because we cannot

° Isaiah i. 10.

° See Bishop Jebb, *Practical Theology*, ii. 283, &c.

comprehend or explain them; danger of forfeiting Divine grace, because, being unable to trace its workings, we will not be at the trouble of seeking it. Even in the course of the brief controversy which the Sermon has occasioned, some remarkable facts have occurred, to strengthen the impression which all Church history would make, as to the ill tendencies inseparable from disregard of antiquity.

For example, in answer to the allegation, that our assurance of the spiritual interpretation of Solomon's Song depends mainly on a constant tradition of the early Church, it is replied, that a spiritual interpretation is, from the evidence "of the book itself, the only one that is consistent with its canonicity^p." What is this but expressly submitting the Canon of Scripture, so far, to each man's private taste and judgment? what is it but laying down rules beforehand what inspired writings ought to be? At this very time, in regard of this very book, we see the effect of such licentious discussion; the most distinguished living theologian among dissenters having refused to accept it as part of the sacred Scripture, on the ground that *he cannot see* how it may be expounded in any sense which *he considers* worthy of a divine origin^q. The opponent of Tradition, indeed, goes on to say, that "we are scripturally led to interpret the Canticles as we do the forty-fifth Psalm, and many similar portions of Scripture." But how are we so led? Not by any reference in the New Testament, for the book is not once cited or alluded to, but by analogy of several passages in which the same kind of allegory is employed. Now how do we know that we have a right to assume such an analogy here? Scripture itself does not affirm it. Reason is not so positive about it, but that many distinguished interpreters have laid down a rule inconsistent

^p *Chr. Observer*, May, 1837, p. 328.

^q *Scripture Testim. to the Messiah*, i. 46. ed. 2.

with such an application of it—the rule, namely, that nothing must be received as a type, without “*solid proof from Scripture itself*” of “the Divine intention in the correspondence between it and the antitype.” The most that we can attain to, on such premises, is to say, that the book may be *possibly* canonical, (i. e. if history is right in saying that it made part of the Jewish Scriptures at the time when our Lord set His seal on them;) but on the interpretation of it we must be absolutely silent, for the literal meaning is pronounced unworthy of Scripture, and, concerning any other, nothing is revealed. Nor would this be incredible to such as are convinced, that we are in no sort judges beforehand what sort of a book Scripture was likely to be, how far intelligible at all, how far its own interpreter: but to those who have made up their minds that it must be “a volume which may be understood,” and understood “without traditional aid¹,” the case is too likely to prove matter of serious offence. The more comfortable, surely, as well as the more religious way is, to accept, with all reverence, whatever intimations God has graciously vouchsafed for aiding our conviction, both of the genuineness and of the right exposition of the sacred books. Let us ask of those to whom Scripture was first delivered, those who had the means of consulting inspired persons as to the meaning of obscure places. We shall find these agreeing in the following rule of interpretation: That the types and figures which the New Testament expressly notices out of the Old, are but a few out of many, specimens or ensamples, as it were, of the manner in which the Holy Ghost wills us to regard the whole of the former dispensation. This gives us just what we want: authority for applying the imagery which we find in the

¹ Bishop Van Mildert, as quoted in Horne’s *Introduction*, ii. 724.

² *Chr. Obs.* ubi supra.

forty-fifth Psalm and elsewhere, to the exposition of the similar imagery in Solomon's Song; although the two differ in this material point, that the one is formally quoted in the New Testament, the other not even obscurely alluded to. When we take into consideration the witness of the first ages, we feel that this sacred application rests no longer on our own critical conjectures, but upon fair practical evidence, that men of God so taught in the beginning of the Gospel.

To this it will be presently said, You are claiming the sanction of inspiration to all the extravagancies of the early mystical expounders. And it may be as shortly replied, We are doing no such thing: we claim attention to the fact, that a certain *rule* of interpretation was recognised by those, who could not, all things considered, be deceived in the matter; but it does not follow that in their *application* of the rule they were left in no measure to their own fallible judgment. The principle, that Scripture is sufficient for the substance of the faith, is a sacred principle, and infallibly, i. e. certainly, true, without any kind of exception; yet men may err, and have erred, in *their selection* of fundamentals out of Scripture. So in this matter of primitive exposition; we may receive with respect, nay with awe, the rule of regarding the New Testament quotations as ensamples only of the true way to interpret the Old, without at all claiming infallibility for the details of any comment, professing to be founded on that rule.

Not but that, in some instances, the catholic consent, even on details of interpretation, is so marked and unquestionable, and comes with so much authority, as to justify us in concluding, that besides the general rule regarding all types, they had a special witness from the first age to the meaning of the Holy Ghost in those particular texts.

A prominent case of that kind is the allegorical application of the Canticles: concerning the proof of which from antiquity, whoever permits himself to speak lightly, had better take care lest he be found slighting a very gracious providence of God, for the protection of a portion of His word, peculiarly exposed to the rudeness of the scorner. Such an one will perhaps do well to consider, whether he be going the true way to encourage, in himself or in others, veneration for the Bible.

4. This instance has been dwelt on the longer, as peculiarly apt to confirm and illustrate the position, "that the Holy Scriptures themselves may be fast losing reverence through the resolute defiance of Tradition which some affect." And is there not ground to apprehend the like with regard to the Holy Sacraments also? What but a too exclusive jealousy of Tradition could have prevented the writer of the sentence noted below[†] from perceiving, that it sounds as if he were scornfully denying all supernatural virtue in the Holy Eucharist? a denial which, of course, was very far from his thoughts. For the life-giving miracle, the mention of which so offends him, is simply this, that "the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." And it is called "life-giving," because it is the appointed means of participation of Christ, Who is "a quickening Spirit," and "our life;" even as He Himself said, "I am that Bread of life," and "he that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life." Neither is God hereby robbed of His prerogative, any more than

[†] *Christ. Obs.* May, 1837, p. 329. "As to Mr. Keble's notions of 'the life-giving miracle' of 'Christ's real Presence,' which 'has been left thoroughly mysterious both by Scripture and Tradition,' we shall only say, that the records of Popery abundantly prove that mysticism is neither theology nor piety."

our Saviour could be said to forego His prerogative of opening the eyes of the blind, when He first spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and then anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

Nor is the Holy Spirit, as some fear, at all dishonoured by this statement, in respect of His Office as the Lord and Giver of Life. Rather we may shew from the Primitive Liturgies^u, and from that of our own Church as it was originally formed from them, that the honour of God's Spirit in the Holy Sacrament is no way so effectually vindicated as by appealing to ecclesiastical Tradition.

The Primitive Liturgies, with the exception perhaps of the Roman, agree in distinctly invoking God the Holy Ghost to descend upon the sacred elements, and prepare them to be the communication of Christ's Body and Blood (and therefore of life supernatural) to the faithful. *E. g.* the Alexandrian Liturgy, denominated from St. Basil, (the very words of which, in not a few cases, may be satisfactorily traced back at least to his own time,) appoints this supplication to be used immediately after the commemoration of the words of institution^r. "We therefore, also, remembering His holy sufferings, His rising again from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His sitting on the right hand of Thee, Who art God and Father, and His glorious and fearful coming again, offer unto Thee Thine own, out of Thine own gifts. And we supplicate and beseech Thee, merciful and gracious Lord,—we Thy sinful and unworthy servants,—and worship Thee, that by the good pleasure of Thy goodness, Thy Holy Spirit may

^u Which, in those points wherein they agree, are equivalent to a genuine formulary of the first age. See Palmer's *Dissertation on Primitive Liturgies*, prefixed to his *Origines Liturgicæ*, and *Tracts for the Times*, No. 63.

^r S. Basilii Op. ed. Bened. t. iii. p. 678, 9.

come upon us Thy servants, and upon these Thy gifts here set forth, and sanctify and exhibit them to be most holy: and may cause this bread to become the holy Body of Him our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, unto forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, to all who partake thereof: and this cup, the precious Blood of the New Testament of Him our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, unto forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who partake thereof. And do Thou count us worthy, O Lord, to partake of Thy holy mysteries, unto sanctification of soul and body and spirit, that we may become one body and one spirit, and may find a portion and inheritance to possess with all Thy saints, who from all time have been well-pleasing in Thy sight." The first Prayer Book of King Edward VI. directed consecration to be made as follows: "Heare us, O mercyfull Father, we beseeche Thee, and with Thy Holy Spirite and worde vouchsafe to blesse and sanctifie these Thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the Bodie and Blood of Thy most derely beloved Sonne Jesus Christe; Who in the same night," &c. (as in our present Service.) So far is the teaching of Tradition, on this point, from neglecting to honour the Giver of Life in the Sacrament of eternal life.

On the contrary, it may be thought, that if circumstances had permitted this part of the ancient Service to be retained, communicants would have been so much the more effectually taught to give glory to the blessed Spirit, not only by the tenor of the Liturgy itself; but also by the light which it would have thrown on certain passages of holy writ, which, as things are, they hardly understand to refer to the Communion at all; such (*e. g.*) as where the Corinthians are reminded, "By one Spirit ye have been all baptized into one body and ye have

been all made to drink into one Spirit^y ;” and where St. John mentions together as Three combining in One witness, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood: promising his remark with the following verse, which, to any one familiar with the ancient Liturgical Services, must have sounded very descriptive of the Communion: “This is He that came” (or rather “cometh,” ἐλθὼν) “by water and blood, even Jesus Christ:” (for in those days they always mixed water in the cup of blessing; and some, at least in St. Cyprian’s time, thought they might consecrate with water only^z; which error and irreverence, if it existed in St. John’s day also, might give occasion to the following clause:) “Not by water only, but by water and blood. And,” he proceeds, “it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth,” or “The Truth:” that which causes the reality and substance of the Sacraments, and hinders them from being mere signs and shadows. This conjectural interpretation is offered without any prejudice to the part which holy Baptism may be reasonably supposed to claim in the inspired allusion and argument, since there also is a combination of the visible water and the

^y 1 Cor. xii. 13. “i. e. We have arrived at the same mysterious privilege, we partake of the same table. And why said he not, We are fed with the same Body, and drink the same Blood? Because, by the word Spirit he indicated both—both the Blood and the Flesh—for by means of both we are made to drink of one Spirit. But as I think, he is here speaking of *that visitation of the Spirit which takes place after Baptism and before the holy Communion:*” ἐκέλευεν τοῦ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ τὴν ἐπιφοίτησιν, τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος καὶ πρὸ τῶν μυστηρίων ἐγγινομένην ἡμῶν.” See St. Chrys. *in loco*. As much as to say, that the Spirit here spoken of is the Holy Ghost, shewing Himself especially in the two Sacraments; by His regenerating grace ensuing upon the Sacrament of Baptism, and by His consecrating grace preparing both the worshippers and the elements for the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

^z Ep. 63. p. 148, &c. Ed. Fell.

cleansing blood of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the agent, and has the glory^a.

5. The Apostolical Succession is another subject sure almost to attract to itself whatever particles of instinctive rationalism may be lurking in the mind to which it is presented. But surely in the outset it may claim to be treated with seriousness, on the ground urged by Bishop Butler against the despisers of religion in general; viz. that the *a priori* objections which occur to ingenious men concerning it, are such as may be urged against God's natural government, which is plain undeniable matter of fact, in spite of all such objections; therefore the Apostolical Succession *may*, as far as similar objections go, turn out matter of fact also, and the light extemporal way in which many reject it *may* have results similar to those, which attend the like rejection of other mysteries, whether of natural or of revealed religion. This consideration alone ought to protect the doctrine against insinuations, whether grave or sportive, that it is of course unworthy of God, because it represents Him as making the spiritual welfare of one man depend on the manner in which another executes his trust. Whatever is said against that dispensation would hold against what we daily see in the course of nature, as we call it. The moral condition of children is influenced by the conduct of their parents; of subjects by that of their rulers, and the like; and why should it not be

^a Another text, which is with great reason supposed to convey the same allusion, is Rom. xv. 15. "The grace that is given me of God, that I should be the *Minister* (λειτουργῶν) of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles, *exercising the priest's office* (ἱερουργοῦντα) in respect of the Gospel of God: that the *offering up* (προσφορὰ) of the Gentiles might be acceptable, BEING SANCTIFIED BY THE HOLY GHOST: (ἡγιασμένη ἐν ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ ἍΓΙΩ.)" In which passage are four or five liturgical words. This remark is borrowed from the papers of a deceased friend, which it is hoped will be given to the world before long. He seems to have taken it from a passage in Bishop Hicke's.

equally credible that even fallible and unworthy men may be endued with real power to put their brethren out of the Church, or admit them into it; *i. e.* to change their condition in such a manner as shall make the greatest possible difference in respect of revealed and covenanted privileges? (It is not said, “*immediately in respect of final salvation.*”) Now this defensive argument from experience is so obvious in this case, and lies so near the root of all religion whatever, that it almost seems to be irreligious thoughtlessness, when men allow themselves to deride the Succession, either before all enquiry, or because on enquiry they find the evidence not so irresistible as they think it ought to be, or because the Succession itself is represented as a mystery, and of course left, as all mysteries are, in some respects dimly revealed; *i. e.* in the world’s language, “vague and indistinct.” It cannot be set aside by treating it as “a new discovery in Tradition,”—a vague idea of certain individuals only,—when all men know that it is a received theological term, denoting a doctrine clearly enough understood, and always maintained, whether truly or untruly, by more or fewer in this Church of England (to say nothing now of other times and Churches) ever since the following statement was put forth by authority of Archbishop Cranmer: “Order is a gift of grace or ministration in Christ’s Church, given of God to Christian men by the consecration and imposition of the Bishop’s hands upon them and as the Apostles themselves, in the beginning of the Church, did Order Priests and Bishops, so they appointed and willed the other Bishops after them to do the like^b.”

One would think the appearance, *prima facie*, of the doctrine in the Church Prayer Book might save it at least

^b *Necessary Doctrine, &c.* 1543. ap. *Formularies of Faith temp. Hen. VIII.* Oxford, 1825, p. 277, 8.

from being treated with contumely. This is a matter on which especial challenge has been made, and that challenge is accepted most willingly. On comparing different expressions of censure, it should seem that the phrase most objected to is "the grace of the Apostolical Succession." Two points are implied in the phrase; first, that the sacerdotal office in the Christian Church is conveyed by succession from the Apostles; secondly, that a peculiar grace or gift of the Holy Ghost accompanies the conveyance of that office.

As to the first; if the Articles are to be taken in their literal and grammatical sense, surely the 23d Article affirms the principle of the Succession, however confidently men quote it on the contrary side. The way to judge of this is to see how it would work in *practice*; for, as was remarked above, the Articles are altogether of a practical cast, adapted to the actual guidance of this Church and of her Ministers under controversies and cases really existing. Thus the Article in question supposes a person claiming to be a Christian Minister, and supplies a simple test whereby to determine whether such his claim be valid. It directs that this question to be asked, "*Who called you to the office you assume? Was it one who had public authority given him to do so?*" Now apply this to the first person professing to be ordained by Luther, or Calvin, or Wesley. Would he not, if he spake truth, be obliged to answer the second question in the negative? Must we not, by the letter of the Article, deny his commission? Suppose him nevertheless to go on, and pretend not only to preach, baptize, and consecrate, but also to ordain others, still pleading the same warrant, a commission to do so from Luther, or Calvin, or Wesley. Would not the same process have to be repeated, and with the same result, in the case of each person claiming to be ordained

by him? unless we will say, that though Luther or Calvin could not himself lawfully ordain, he might empower others to do so; which no one probably would ever think of maintaining. The Article therefore virtually enforces Succession as the test of a lawful Ministry. Were it strictly observed, no person, having only Lutheran, Calvinist, or Wesleyan orders, could ever be allowed to preach or minister the Sacraments in the congregation.

The title of Bishop indeed is not mentioned, and it may be that it was avoided on purpose to make the exclusion intended less invidious; but what if it turn out, as sometimes in Acts of Parliament, that the *description* answer the end of the enactment *more effectually* than the *name* would have done? Had it been simply said, "Those we judge lawfully called, who have their calling and mission from Bishops," there would have been perhaps room for the Genevan allegation, that all Presbyters, being in fact Bishops, received with their office the power of ordaining; but now the Article precludes this, by reciting (so to call it) the *special clause* in the Episcopal commission, on which the whole matter turns; as much as to say, "People may call themselves Bishops; but if they cannot shew that they have received this particular prerogative, we will not have their ordinations accounted lawful." This meets the case of Danish ordinations at present; their superintendants are called Bishops, but there has been a break in the

^c It may be worth remarking here, that the Prayer Book of Elizabeth is the first which inserts in the Consecration Service an express mention of the power of Ordination as one of the especial prerogatives of Bishops, in the question, namely, "Will you be faithful in ordaining, sending, and laying hands on others?" In all former ordinals, as Mr. Palmer shews, that power was understood of course as part of the Episcopal office; no clause formally relating to it had been accounted necessary. The insertion afterwards may be thought to indicate an anxiety to point out the necessity of the test required in the Article.

chain, and their Ministers cannot make good the test required in the Article : consequently they cannot, according to our rule, be admitted to officiate in English churches. This is mentioned to shew the *practical* bearing of the Article.

Observe now what would follow from this, if we could agree with those who consider the Articles as a Confession of Faith, supposing the term Confession of Faith to be taken in its usual and obvious meaning ; viz. for a Creed, or enumeration of doctrinal fundamentals. Belief in the exclusion of all but Episcopal orders, instead of being left indifferent, will be absolutely *made a condition of communion* ; the very error which is falsely charged on the maintainers of Apostolical Succession ; who believe it to be a divine and necessary ordinance, but are far from wishing it to be put in the Creed, or from requiring the express knowledge and profession of it as a term of admission into the kingdom of Heaven.

But there is another place, where the English Church defines who shall be taken for a lawful Minister, viz. the Preface to the Ordination Service, and that in the following words : “ No man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in the United Church of England and Ireland except he be called thereunto according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly EPISCOPAL consecration or ordination.” Is it to be supposed that the Church, in different parts of her formularies, intended to give different accounts of the test of a lawful Ministry ? If not, then we have reason to believe that the Bishops, and the Bishops only, were in her mind, when she spoke in her twenty-third Article of a lawful calling being that which proceeds from “ men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord’s vineyard.” The

rather, as the thirty-sixth Article expressly adopts and approves the Ordination Services, affirming, on the one hand, against the Papists, that they “contain all things necessary to consecration and ordering;” on the other hand, against the Puritans, that “neither have they any thing that of itself is superstitious and ungodly.” In which latter clause is implied an adoption of the other doctrine now excepted against—the doctrine of ministerial grace derived by succession from the Apostles; which doctrine, as will presently appear, runs through the Ordination Services.

But before proceeding to that head, let the reason be noticed which the English Church herself assigns, for limiting her acknowledgment of a lawful call to those who have had episcopal consecration or ordination. It is “to the intent that these orders may be CONTINUED, and reverently used and esteemed in the Church of England.” Without such limitation, it would seem, the Church judges that the orders would not be “continued.” This sounds a good deal like succession by Episcopal ordination; and the following words of the same preface carry back the succession to the Apostles: “It is evident to all men diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that *from the Apostles’ time* there have been these orders of ministers in Christ’s Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.”

We learn from this preface what to think of the occasional allowance of Presbyterian orders, which seems to have taken place during the first years of the Reformation, and which is supposed by some to receive sanction from a certain Act of the 13th of Elizabeth. It was neither more nor less than an illegal irregular proceeding, connived at sometimes for supposed edification’s sake, sometimes for political reasons; but from time to time excepted against,

as in the case of Whittingham, by Archbishop Sandys; in that of Travers, by Archbishop Whitgift; and never, as it may seem, effectually vindicated. And as both the above-mentioned cases occurred after the Act of the 13th of Elizabeth, one might with some likelihood infer, that it was the intention of that Act to take away doubt touching the admissibility of Romish rather than of Genevan letters of orders. Clearly it was so understood and acted on; as is shewn by the complaints of Travers in his own behalf, and of Lord Huntingdon in behalf of Whittingham^d. Any how, the Act, resting only on secular authority, cannot have done away with the Ordination Service, which is still received by solemn subscription of the whole Clergy of England. And if the meaning of it was such as is pretended, it is but one more instance of the danger of allowing mere statesmen to legislate for the Church. In the mean time, nothing which then took place can in any way affect our present succession; it not being averred by any one that ever the office of Bishop was allowed to be exercised on such ordination. Nor, as long as the Ordination Services, with their preface, shall remain as they are, can the Church of England be fairly made responsible for any irregularity of the kind, any more than for the late suppression of Bishoprics, by a Parliament in which Dissenters held sway. She may suffer intrusion, but her witness to the truth remains.

We have next to examine, whether the Church formularies seem to encourage the idea, that the Episcopal succession is a channel of any special grace. We need not be long to seek: the cavils of the Church's enemies will presently direct us to the right point. "The Holy Ghost," said Cartwright and Travers, "you cannot give,

^d Travers ap. Hooker, iii. 690; Strype, *Ann.* II. 2. p. 168, 620.

and therefore you foolishly bid men receive it^e." What was the reply of the Church's defender? Did he disavow all mystical import in the sacred words, "Receive the Holy Ghost," as employed in the Ordination Services? Did he explain them away, as carrying with them no more than the virtue of a prayer, on behalf of the newly-ordained, that they might be faithful, and their ministry blessed?^f Nay, the language, of which he was so unrivalled a master, fails him, as it were, in his endeavour to find words to express the greatness of the gift which he there apprehended. "The Holy Ghost," says he^g, "which our Lord then gave," (when He spake the words to His Apostles,) "was a holy and a ghostly authority, authority over the souls of men, authority, a part whereof consisteth in power to remit and retain sins: 'Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins soever ye remit, they are remitted; whose sins ye retain, they are retained.' . . . Seeing therefore that *the same power is now given*, why should the same form of words expressing it be thought foolish? . . . The power and authority delivered with those words is itself *χάρισμα*, a gracious donation which the Spirit of God doth bestow." And besides, "we may most assuredly persuade ourselves that the hand which imposeth upon us the function of our ministry, doth, under the same form of words, so tie itself thereunto, that he which receiveth the burthen is thereby for ever warranted to have the Spirit with him and in him for his assistance, countenance, and support, in whatsoever he faithfully doth to discharge duty. . . . When we take ordination, we also receive the presence of the Holy Ghost, partly to guide, direct, and strengthen us in all our ways, and partly to assume unto itself, for the more authority, those actions that appertain to our place and

^e Hooker, V. lxxvii. 5.

^f See Burnet on Art. xxxvi.

^g Hooker, V. lxxvii. 7, 8.

calling. . . . We have for the least and lowest duties performed by virtue of ministerial power, *that* to dignify, grace, and authorize them, which no other offices on earth can challenge. Whether we preach, pray, baptize, communicate, condemn, give absolution, or whatever, as disposers of God's mysteries; our words, judgments, acts, and deeds, are not ours, but the Holy Ghost's." Before, in a still more striking passage^h, he had borne testimony not only to the reality of the grace then and there given, but also to the ordinary necessity of being able to shew our Lord's warrant for conferring it; i. e. in other words, to the Apostolical Succession. "The power of the ministry of God translatheth out of darkness into glory; it raiseth men from the earth, and bringeth God Himself down from heaven; by blessing visible elements, it maketh them invisible grace; it giveth daily the Holy Ghost; it hath to dispose of that Flesh which was given for the life of the world, and that Blood which was poured out to redeem souls; when it poureth maledictions upon the heads of the wicked, they perish; when it revoketh the same, they revive. O wretched blindness, if we admire not so great power, more wretched if we consider it aright, and notwithstanding imagine that any but God can bestow it!"

Hooker then made no question as to the mystical import and virtue of the form, wherewith the Church of England ordains and consecrates. And his construction seems to be greatly confirmed by the choice of Lessons which she has made for those occasions, by the scriptural allusions of which the Offices are full, and by the use of the solemn prayer, *Veni Creator*, immediately before the laying on of hands.

In these short and occasional remarks, it was not possible to do justice to so high an argument: but the Author

^h V. lxxvii. 1.

hopes that enough has been said, to shew that there are appearances of both the Succession and the grace conveyed by it being recognised, as well in the Articles as in the Ordination Service. There is so much in favour of them, as ought to protect the whole subject from scornful indifference and dismissal without examination.

Nor let any person shrink from this view, under the notion that it invests the Ministry with any thing like infallible authority. We may not be able to conceive how, yet undoubtedly so it is, that a man may receive the grace of God in vain; he may defile the temple of the Holy Ghost; he may have supernatural grace dwelling in him, to guide him into all goodness, and yet may be "almost in all evil:" why then should it be incredible that a minister of God, as such, may have the same Spirit especially abiding in *him*, as for all other parts of his office, so for the custody of the good deposit, the fundamentals of doctrine and practice, and yet be liable to error, and heresy, and apostasy? That grace implies infallibility, is an error of the same school, which supposes that faith cannot be required except on overpowering, demonstrative evidence; which is impatient of obscurity and indistinctness, and longs after present visible *effect*; which fancies, in the pregnant words of a great writer¹, "that it cannot be thought God would have bestowed any favour at all upon us, unless in the degree which we think He might;" and where there is instruction, and spiritual aid, and a chance of salvation, concludes that there must of necessity be also comfort, and assurance, and satisfaction of mind.

6. Once more. There appears to be danger of irreverence—danger of a very subtle and insidious kind—in declining *religiously* to accept universal tradition (con-

¹ Bp. Butler, *Anal.* p. II. c. vi. near the beginning.

firmed as it is by Scripture) as our guide in the *selection of fundamentals*; if at least it be irreverence, rather to choose for ourselves among Scripture truths, which we will regard as fundamental, and which secondary, than to acquiesce in the choice made for us with such evidence of providential guidance, as reasonable persons would consider sufficient in all other practical matters.

The word Irreverence, let it be observed, is used here to denote the *tendency* of the principle, not the *actual feeling* of any particular person. No doubt, among those who have been trained in the notion here combated, are many of most reverential hearts and lives; and one sign of their being so is, that they do almost always, more or less unconsciously perhaps, yet really, use the Creed of their Baptism, the baptismal Creed of the holy Church Universal, to help them in making their selection, and to test it when made.

But the farther we are from questioning any individual's devotion and reverence, the more necessary does it seem to be on our guard against the principle, if erroneous: since its acceptance by such persons is an alarming symptom of its very general influence. The principle meant is that which would make it necessary for each person to select for himself a certain number of divine truths out of the great body of the Scriptures, on which he may lay his finger and say; This, *and this alone*, is the Gospel: *it hangs together as one perfect whole*. Surely this is a startling kind of proposition, to be enunciated by any individual as the result of his own enquiries. Surely it is not a prerogative to be lightly assumed, that of sitting in judgment on Scripture truths, and determining which are essential as formal objects of belief, and which not. Surely it involves a responsibility far more perilous, and a labour far more

overwhelming, than the method which the Sermon recommends; accepting, namely, as the Gospel, the substance of the baptismal Creed; testing it by Scripture; and, when it has been scripturally verified, acquiescing in the judgment of the Church—the Primitive Universal Church—concerning its sufficiency.

Observe, what is insisted on is the *substance*, not the identical expressions of the Creed: according to the general if not universal difference between the traditional and written relics of the Apostles; that in the former, the *things* only,—in the latter, the very *words* also,—are holy. This may suffice to answer historical objections, drawn from the variation in terms between reports made of the baptismal Creed by Tertullian, Cyprian, Irenæus, and others; to which, if one added the partial enumeration by St. Paul in the beginning of 1 Cor. xv., a good deal might be said for the probability of such a conjecture.

But are there not other objections felt, besides historical ones, to the paramount authority of the Creed? Such expressions as, “It hangs together as one perfect whole,” would seem to imply a disposition to require, as essential to any statement of fundamentals, that its parts should be connected with one another *in a manner intelligible to us*; whereas the propositions of the Creed are isolated in form, and do not at all impress the mind with any necessity of apprehending them as portions of an entire system. For any thing that appears on the face of the document, it may be sufficient heartily to receive, and practically to acknowledge, each truth as it there stands, whether we discern much or little of their relation to each other. Here then is a remarkable difference between the traditional statement of fundamentals, and those which devout and ingenious men are in the habit of selecting and arranging for themselves. System, method, connection,

mutual illustration, is a *sine qua non* in the one; not so in the other. What authority have we for so insisting on it? Scripture says, such and such things are necessary: does it any where say, we must be able to shew why they are necessary? Is not the rule applicable in respect of our faith towards God, which holds in all other parts of our moral conduct? The *fact* is the main point or principle; and, if in such matters *that* be made sufficiently evident, there will be no need to give the *reason* besides^k." We have here, then, a *second* instance of unconscious irreverence, into which those who refuse Primitive Tradition as their guide to the selection of fundamentals are almost inevitably betrayed. Professing and intending to confine themselves to the written Word of God, they do in effect bring in a mere human unauthorized Tradition; viz. that in order to a right faith in the Gospel, the connection of its parts as a system must be discerned^l.

From which immediately follows a *third* great evil: that when, after our best efforts, we are not able to make out

^k Ἀρχὴ τὸ ὅτι καὶ εἰ ἐν τούτοις φαίνοιτο ἄρκούντως, οὐδὲν προσδεήσει τοῦ διότι.

^l It seems to have been a fallacy of this kind which led to the censure uttered in the course of this controversy, (Mr. Russell's *Remarks*, p. 21, 37, &c.) on the assertion that the Atonement was not a *manifestation* of God's justice: by which is probably meant, that *we have no sufficient data to prove* it exactly just, according to our notice of justice. No one denies that it is an awful signification of God's justice, so far as it is fitted and intended to impress our minds with a deep sense of His real hatred of sin. Of course, if faith implies a full and systematic understanding, to say that you cannot explain our Lord's satisfaction is equivalent to saying you do not believe it. Not so, on any other supposition. But "the *deductions* of supernatural truth are not within the sphere of the human intellect. They are not to be inferred as discoverable conclusions from one primary principle. A Redeemer being foretold, His divine nature, His incarnation, the vicarious nature of His suffering, His death, and the atoning efficacy of it;—all these, though real connections of truth, comprehended, with the original promise, in the scheme of the Divine economy, come down to man like new streams of light by their separate channels; and when they are communicated in their proper form, then we know them, not before." Davison *on Primitive Sacrifice*, p. 152.

the place of any particular doctrine in the system, we are tempted to leave it out of our Creed, as unessential, at any rate to us. The common pervading attractive force, by the supposed laws of which it has become usual in our days to adjust the relation of the parts of Christianity with each other, is their tendency to act on the soul of man, and produce in him such and such heavenly dispositions. Those doctrines, in which it is less easy to discern any such practical tendency, are of course comparatively disregarded.

Can this be justified by reason or Scripture? Is it not a mere human tradition, contrary to the analogy of God's natural and moral government, and traceable to a known infirmity of fallen mankind?

But to proceed: the secret but sure *tendency* of measuring the vitality of any truth, by the clearness with which we discern its connection with "the Gospel, considered as a transaction between God and the soul of man," is to withdraw attention, and finally faith, from the unseen truths themselves, towards the process in our own minds, which is matter of feeling and experience: *e. g.* from the Catholic verities concerning the most holy Trinity, to *our own* contemplation of God *simply* as *our* Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. It is enough just to mention this topic, which has received of late both full discussion in the writings of the defenders of Primitive Tradition, and melancholy illustration in the conduct of some of its most strenuous opponents.

It may be well to notice one more symptom of the unconscious rationalism, in which men are involved by mistrust of Primitive Tradition. They dwell on single texts or propositions, enouncing some one great Gospel truth, (*e. g.* the resurrection of our Lord,) as if acknowledging them were equivalent to an acknowledgment of

the whole Gospel. And so, virtually and in reason, it is, but not practically, not in the faith of men's minds. All geometrical truths may be involved in the original axioms and definitions, but we do not therefore consider a person who has learned the two or three first pages of Euclid as actually assenting to all that is important in geometry. Now we see what fatal use will be made of this particular method of simplifying beyond what the Church has sanctioned, by the history of the school of Episcopius, Locke, and Hoadley; they set out with this aphorism, "that the one point of faith necessary to salvation was simply to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the true Messiah." What was the result? The first discarded the divinity of our Lord from his list of fundamental truths; the second, apparently, was at least an Arian^m; the third denied the grace of the Sacraments. True therefore as it may be in a certain sense to say, that any one book or any one text of Scripture contains in itself, after a sort, all things necessary to eternal salvation, it is not a truth which in any way dispenses with the use of Creeds and Confessions of faith; or of Tradition, if any can be produced capable of guaranteeing such documents. It is not a truth which can help us to discern fundamentals. For the question will still remain, "which among the many things implied in this comprehensive saying are needful to be really thought of and professed by all?" and the deeper and more comprehensive the proposition may be, the more is this difficulty enhanced. The appropriate use of such texts lies, not in the *selection* of fundamentals, but in their *demonstration*. "Tradition," in this respect, "teaches; Scripture proves." And we ought to be very thankful to the Almighty for leaving us a tradition so

^m See his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, Works, vii. 171. ed. 1801; *Commentary on the Epistles*, viii. 122, 338.

complete as the Creed is, not only for our comfort, but because we are thereby spared a great and otherwise inevitable temptation to a kind of irreverence, which, as it is, proves but too inviting to many of us: the irreverence of dealing rudely with the words of the Most High, while we are handling them as the materials of a system which we are to plan out for ourselves, instead of marking them with silent reverence, as the foundations of a vast Temple, the outline whereof, so far as we can trace it, has been previously delivered into our hands by an unerring Architect.

The reader has now before him a specimen, both of the kind of *protest* which seemed desirable, on behalf of the great Church principles, against the misrepresentations which commonly beset them; and also of the *cautions* most required in the examination of those principles. And if, under the latter head, for clearness' sake, and also for the sake of incidentally justifying what he had before stated, the author has illustrated his argument from the pages of those writers to whom he is unfortunately opposed in this discussion, it has not been, if he at all knows himself, from any unkind or invidious feeling, but simply because he knew no better way of pointing out the tendency of their line of argument, towards a rationalism not the less perilous to others, because they themselves are utterly unconscious of it. He charges no man with disloyalty to the Church of England, and hopes in his turn not to be so charged; convinced as he is, that the view which he humbly advocates is not only permitted, but warranted and taught, by her formularies. And, in the substantial truth of that view, for which, every day of his life, he seems to perceive accumulating evidence, from Scripture, from Reason, and from Church History, he finds a sure ground of hope, that the earnest and (he trusts) not un-

charitable inculcation of it will not be hurtful to the Church of God.

Although in general the Author has declined noticing, in this Postscript, objections of detail, criticisms on particular expressions, or fallacies apprehended in particular arguments; as feeling that if any persons could be once set in the right way with regard to the great principles, such things might well be passed over, affecting, at most, what is of small consequence in comparison, his own credit for skill in reasoning, history, or languages; yet there are two points, on which it may be well to make an exception to that rule, by reason of their aptness to illustrate the whole subject.

One of these topics is, the state of the Canon of the New Testament implied in St. Paul's Epistles, particularly those to Timothy. The Sermon had said, "The truths and rules, committed by St. Paul to Timothy's charge, were wholly or for the most part unwritten." The expression was so far, perhaps, verbally incorrect, as it took no notice of the Old Testament, which undoubtedly formed part of the Church's *Depositum*, quite down from the day of Pentecost. But it is objected to on a different ground: viz. that at the time when these Epistles were indited, a very large proportion of the books of the New Testament was already in existence. The objection overlooks the fact, that the time spoken of was not the time when St. Paul was writing, but when Timothy received his charge, that is, when he was first admitted to a portion in the Christian Ministry. And that was, before St. Paul wrote the first Epistle to the Thessalonians; as is probable, by the opening of that Epistle, where Timothy joins with St. Paul and Silas in a solemn benediction to the Church; and evident, from the follow-

ing passage: "We sent Timotheus, our brother, and a minister of God, and a fellow-worker with us in the Gospel of Christ." Now the date of that Epistle lies between A. D. 51 and A. D. 53. And Mr. Greswell, with great probability, assigns to the year 52, or thereabouts, the first appearance both of St. Mark's Gospel, and of the Greek of that of St. Matthew. In short, with the exception of the Hebrew original of St. Matthew, the first Epistle to the Thessalonians seems to be generally considered by learned men as the earliest portion of the whole Christian Scriptures. That the Thessalonians, at least, had no other part of the New Testament as yet in their hands, may not improbably be argued, perhaps, from a verse in the second Epistle, "Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have received, whether by word or our Epistle." This does not seem a natural way of writing, if they possessed any Gospel or Epistle besides, of equal authority with the letter which St. Paul had sent. Yet if St. Paul or Timothy knew of any such, we should naturally expect them to have communicated it to the Thessalonians; who seem to have been as worthy of such a boon as any converts could be, by their simple and affectionate faith; and whose condition as new converts, early bereft of their spiritual fathers, and exposed to much persecution and insult, called for all the comfort and aid which such memorials were apt to afford. Again, if St. Paul knew not as yet either St. Matthew's Gospel, or St. Mark's, (for to them the question is nearly confined,) it is hardly conceivable that either could have been made public over any considerable part of the existing Church. For to whom could such a document have been known sooner than to the learned and vigilant Apostle of the Gentiles? It follows that both the charge delivered to

▪ 1 Thess. iii. 2.

Timothy, and the faith in which the Thessalonians were instructed, were "almost or wholly unwritten," excepting always so much as was contained in the books of the Old Testament. Those books, indeed, Timothy had known "from a child," and they were "able to make him wise unto salvation:" but then it was "through faith that was in Christ Jesus:" that is, by the help of that key to their true meaning, which the history and doctrine of Christ, written or unwritten, afforded to considerate believers.

The argument therefore is in a great measure independent of the exact number of books supposed to be written before such and such an Epistle. It is sufficient on the question of date that the Gospel of St. John, allowed to be doctrinally one of the most important portions of the Bible, was later than all St. Paul's writings; and that St. Paul, in writings of several dates, speaks of the *παρακαταθήκη*, or *depositum*, as of a standard or measure complete in itself, and completely within reach of those whom he was addressing. The gradual accumulation of the treasures of the New Testament was going on all the while, but, as a standard of doctrine, was rather a provision for future ages, than a necessary supply of any want then existing. The case has been compared, not unaptly, to that ingenious contrivance of modern machinery, by which two metals, expanding under opposite temperatures, are arranged so as that the shrinking of the one shall be compensated by the dilating of the other, whereby on the whole the same effect is produced. Thus when exact tradition, of all at least but fundamental doctrine°, would have become gradually more uncertain, its place was providentially supplied by the Canon of Scripture becoming fixed, and thoroughly known all over the Christian world.

° Fundamentals were secured, *perhaps*, by the Creed: *i. e.* in *substance*, though not in *evidence*.

An effect mainly perhaps attributable (among second causes) to the operation of the great Church principle, that necessary doctrines must all be proveable from Scripture. Bishop Taylor gives a remarkable instance of the process here alluded to. His words are quoted here, not as altogether accurate, but as throwing light both on the general argument, and on that great writer's opinion. "Because the books of Scripture were not all written at once, nor at once communicated, nor at once received; therefore the Churches of God at first were forced to trust their memories, and to try the doctrines by appealing to the memories of others; that is, to the consenting report, and faith delivered and preached to other Churches, especially the chiefest, where the memory of the Apostles was recent and permanent. The mysteriousness of Christ's priesthood, the perfection of His sacrifice, and the unity of it, Christ's advocacy and intercession for us in heaven, might very well be accounted traditions, before St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews was admitted for canonical; but now they are written truths, and if they had not been written, it is likely we should have lost them. But this way could not long be necessary, and could not long be safe^a."

Nay, and we have higher testimony yet to appeal to. St. Luke wrote his Gospel to Theophilus expressly for this end, that it might be a "document of proof;" not to supersede the catechetical instructions (that is, in other words, the traditions) of the Church, but to make us all (*ἐπιγινώσκειν*) know more firmly than ever, *τὴν ἀσφαλείαν*, the absolute certainty of those elementary truths, wherein we, in common with Theophilus, have been instructed, and which we, by the Gospel history, may clearly discern to have come down from heaven. In all this there is nothing

^a *Works*, vol. x. p. 425.

to contradict, but much surely to favour, the notion that Christians never were designed to be left to collect each his own Gospel out of the Scriptures by the unbiassed exercise of private judgment^r. And so far as it can be shewn by any thing like decisive evidence, that we have in our Creeds substantially the same catechetical truths which Theophilus had been taught, so far we are the very persons for whose immediate use St. Luke wrote, and must of course come to the reading of his Gospel with a great advantage over those who consider themselves bound not only to *confirm*, but to *discover*.

But here comes in the second question of detail, on which it seemed desirable to touch; the question, in what sense, and in what measure, the Nicene Creed was traditional rather than scriptural.

Now the method of proceeding at Nicæa appears to have been nearly as follows: Each Bishop was required to rehearse the faith which he and his Church professed, and into which they were baptized. In those statements when nothing appeared of the peculiar views of Arius, but all, on the contrary, with seventeen or eighteen exceptions, agreed substantially in the orthodox interpretation, and shrank, with religious horror, from the first sound of the new doctrine; the burthen of proof was of course thrown on the heresiarch, and he was required to make good his theory by allegations from Scripture; which he endeavoured to do, availing himself also to the utmost of his own skill in philosophy and dialectics. But his allegations being overthrown by large arguments from Scripture itself, the orthodox Creed was considered as sufficiently established. However, to seal the doctrine for ever against the like or more plausible misconstruction, the orthodox traditional

^r Compare on St. Luke's Preface, Dr. Hawkins on *Unauthoritative Tradition*, p. 35, 36.

interpretation was incorporated into a written Creed: being first thoroughly vindicated, both in the substance and wording of it, and also in the annexed anathema*, by reasoning out of Holy Writ. The result was, the Nicene Creed with its anathema. In that document, therefore, we have two points clearly made out; first, the substance of the baptismal Creed of those times; and secondly, the Tradition then received on the sense and importance of the disputed article. These two complete the Creed as a formula; and therefore, *as a formula*, it may be truly said to have its origin, not from Scripture but from Tradition: and yet it is quite necessary that every word of it should be proveable from Holy Scripture, and quite certain that all was so proved, with most religious care, in the first instance.

As to the fact, that such were the proceedings of the Council, it may not, perhaps, be set down in so many words by any historian; but it is capable of being established by circumstantial evidence of the strongest kind. First, there is the general presumption in favour of it. What would all men—what should we ourselves—do under the like circumstances? Would it be natural to discard all reference to Creeds, and Catechisms, and Articles, and Liturgies, out of “an earnest desire to draw all things unto the determination of bare and naked Scripture?” To come with minds altogether blank to the study of the Bible, as to the

* The anathema originally annexed to the Nicene Creed, and answering in its ecclesiastical use to the severe monitory clauses of the Athanasian Creed in the Church of England, is as follows:—“Those who say, ‘There was a time when He was not,’ and, ‘Before He was begotten He was not,’ and, ‘He came into being from among things non-existent, or of some other substance or being,’—those who affirm that the Son of God is ‘created,’ or ‘mutable,’ or ‘alterable,’—are hereby anathematized by the Holy Catholic and Apostolical Church.” See Theodoret, *E. H.* i. 12; St. Athanas. *ad Jovian.* t. i. 781; Concil. Harduin. i. 444; Soer. i. 8. p. 23.

† Hooker, *E. P.* ii 7. 1.

cultivation of a field which no one had ever yet laboured in? For example, suppose a Convocation now called to settle this very point, what degree of deference is due to primitive Tradition; would the received formularies of the Church of England be left entirely out of the question? Nay, already, in the present controversy, a certain tradition—that is, the Thirty-nine Articles—has been alleged as a decisive touchstone of the truth as well as importance of whatever may be taught by a member of the English Church. Whether the allegation in the particular instance were altogether just and adequate, or no, still it seems to indicate, that even the opponents of Tradition, had they been present at Nicæa, might have been led to make considerable use of it.

But let us see what the history of the Council contains, to confirm or disappoint this our natural expectation. Is there any thing in the line taken by those most influential in the Council, before the proceedings commenced, which may help us in judging of the course they would be most likely to pursue afterwards? The public document, by which the peril arising from Arianism was first made known to the Church generally, was the circular letter of Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria, signed also by his Clergy, to the Bishops of every dioceseⁿ. Now in that letter the line taken is analogous to what is here supposed. First he states against Arius, according to Tertullian's rule in such cases, the *præscriptio*, or preliminary exception, arising from the novelty of his doctrines. "Who," says he, "ever heard such things^x? or who now hearing them is not astonished, and stoppeth his ears, that the contamination of these words may not touch his hearing?" These are not mere rhetorical exclamations; as is proved by a comparison with a passage of Athanasius, which begins

ⁿ St. Athanas. i. 397.

^x τίς γὰρ ἤκουσε πώποτε τοιαῦτα;

with the same saying: a saying which indeed appears to have grown into a watchword among the Catholics, "*Who ever heard of such things?*" Whence or from whom did the parasites or bribed partisans of the heresy hear such things? Who, when they were catechumens, spake such things to them? Who told them, 'Leave your worship of the creature, and draw near again to worship a being created and made?' Now if they themselves confess that they have now for the first time heard such things, let them not deny that this heresy is a stranger, and not of the Fathers. But that which is not of the Fathers, but just now invented, what other character can it have than such as St. Paul foretold: 'In the latter times some shall depart from the sound faith?'" Alexander's view may be further understood by his letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople, of the same name, in which the order of the topics is indeed inverted, but the substance of the reasoning is exactly the same¹. The occasion of the letter being to announce the excommunication of Arius, he was led first to give some account of the Arian errors, on which naturally followed a refutation of them out of Scripture: but that being ended, the holy Bishop was not willing to conclude without a distinct enunciation of his own and his Church's faith, conceived in such terms, and with such arrangement, as evidently shew it to be a paraphrase on the baptismal or apostolical Creed then in use at Alexandria. "Concerning which things we so believe, as seemeth meet to the Apostolical Church: In one unbegotten Father . . . and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God . . . and besides this religious opinion concerning the Father and Son, as the sacred Scriptures teach, we confess one Holy Ghost . . . one only Catholic Church, the Apostolical one, . . . and after this we acknowledge the resurrection from

¹ St. Athanas. i. 412. C; cf. 902. B.

² Ap. Theodoret, *E. H.* i. 3.

the dead, the first-fruits whereof was our Lord Jesus Christ, Who assumed the body really, and not in appearance only, of Mary the mother of God : Who, in the end of the world, to put away sin, sojourned among the race of mankind ; Who was crucified and died, and rose again from the dead, and was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of Majesty These things we teach, these we preach, these are the Apostolical doctrines of the Church, for the sake of which also we die, not regarding those who would force us to disavow them, even though they compel us by torments ; not drawing back from the hope which is in them."

Thus much may suffice to shew the opinion of the venerable Alexander, concerning the best way of dealing with the controversy which led to the Nicene Council. But there is another person, St. Athanasius, whose judgment on the same point would go near to determine the question : it being well known that for all the inferiority of his rank, (for he was then only a deacon in the Alexandrian Church,) he exercised a principal influence on the tone and course of the deliberations at Nicæa. Now St. Athanasius more than once mentions a certain "form or stamp" of the faith of a Christian, *χαρακτῆρα τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ*, by recurrence to which doctrines may be best tried, and heresy repressed ; and this form or stamp, he says, we receive by Tradition, but are able to demonstrate it by the Scriptures^b. Thus, speaking of the Arian misinterpretation of the text in Proverbs, rendered by the LXX, "the Lord created Me to be the chief of His ways," he remarks as follows^c : "The heretic will say, Is

^a *Χαρακτῆρ* properly means the image impressed by a seal ; and is transferred to any thing which is originated by and accurately represents another thing. Cf. Heb. i. 3.

^b Ep. ad Adolph. t. i. 914. E.

^c i. 688. B.

it not so written? It is so written, and so expressed with the highest reason; but that which is well said, the heretics understand ill. For if they had perceived and known the very Form (*χαρακτῆρα*) of Christianity, they would not have said that the Lord of glory is a creature, nor have stumbled at the good words of Scripture. But they do not know, nor understand; therefore, as it is written, they walk in darkness. Nevertheless, it is right for us to explain this point, that their folly may be made manifest in this respect also, and that we may not leave out that which is the proper test to be employed against their impiety; perhaps too that themselves may come to a better mind. The very form then of the faith in Christ is this^d: That the Son, the Word of God, being God, (for ‘in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God,’) being the Wisdom and Power of the Father, (for ‘Christ is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God,’) that He, I say, in the end of the world, was made Man for our salvation; (for John himself having said, ‘In the beginning was the Word,’ a little below said, ‘And the Word was made Flesh;’ as much as to say, He was made man) and having become Man, and taken order for all things that appertained to Him as Man, and having subdued and abolished our enemy, Death, sitteth now at the right hand of the Father, in Whom He is, the Father being also in Him, as it was always, and is for ever. Now, this form is from the Apostles through the Fathers^e. For the rest, it is the duty of a reader of the Scripture to search and distinguish when it speaks of the Godhead of the Word, when, on the other hand, of His human attributes; that we

^d Ὁ χαρακτήρ τοίνυν τῆς ἐν ΧΡΙΣΤΩΙ πίστεως ἐστὶν οὗτος τὸν ἴδον τοῦ ΘΕΟΥ, κ. τ. λ.

^e Ὁ μὲν χαρακτήρ οὗτος ἐκ τῶν Ἀποστόλων διὰ τῶν πατέρων δεῖ δὲ λοιπὸν, ἐντυγχάνοντα τῇ γραφῇ, δοκιμάζειν καὶ διακρίνειν, κ. τ. λ.

may not err, taking the one for the other, which is the case of the Arians." The same principle he more briefly expresses, though without the term *χαρακτήρ τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ*, in arguing against a refined form of heresy, the professing, namely, to abstract from all thoughts of our Lord's human nature in our worship of His Person: concerning which, having shewn that it must end in the denial of the Incarnation, he adds^f, "To the Heathen and Jews let us leave such madness and desperation; but to us belongs the right faith, *setting out* from the Apostolical teaching and tradition of the Fathers, and *confirmed* both by the New and the Old Testament." Could he have said more clearly, "Tradition teaches, Scripture proves?"

What is more, and yet nearer to our point, this same "Form of the Faith," for which, as we have seen, Athanasius looked to Tradition, he affirms elsewhere to have been the very drift and scope of the Fathers in drawing up the Nicene Creed: and he himself, be it still remembered, had been among the foremost in that work. "This Council^g," says he, "in Nicæa, is truly a pillar set up with an inscribed warning against every kind of heresy. In this, such also as blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, and call Him a creature, may find their refutation. For the Fathers, having spoken concerning faith in the Son, added presently, 'We believe also in the Holy Ghost;' that professing the full and perfect faith in the Holy Trinity, they might thereby make known *the Form of*

^f T. i. 914. E.

^g Ep. ad Afros, t. i. 899. D. Αὕτη γὰρ ἡ ἐν Νικαίᾳ σύνοδος, ἀληθῶς στηλογραφία κατὰ πάσης αἰρέσεώς ἐστιν· αὕτη καὶ τοὺς βλασφημοῦντας εἰς τὸ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ τὸ ἍΓΙΟΝ, καὶ λέγοντας αὐτὸ κτίσμα, ἀνατρέπει· εἰρηκότες γὰρ οἱ πατέρες περὶ τῆς εἰς τὸν Υἱὸν πίστεως, ἐπήγαγον εὐθύς· πιστευόμεν καὶ εἰς τὸ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ τὸ ἍΓΙΟΝ· ἵνα τελείαν καὶ πλήρη τὴν εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Τριάδα πίστιν ὁμολογησάντες, ΤΟΝ ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΩ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ, καὶ τὴν διδασκαλίαν τῆς διδασκαλίαν τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐν τούτῳ γνωρίσωσι.

the Faith in Christ, τὸν χαρακτῆρα τῆς ἐν ΧΡΙΣΤΩ, πίστεως, and the teaching of the Catholic Church. For it hath become manifest among you, and among all, and no Christian can have in his mind any doubt on this point; that our faith is not in the creature, but in God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things both visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son; and in one Holy Ghost; one God, Him Who is known in the holy and perfect Trinity: into which faith having been baptized, and therein united to the Deity, we trust also to inherit the kingdom of heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

These passages put together seem to afford full and unexceptionable testimony as to the *principle* acted on at Nicæa. But it may be satisfactory to shew, in one or two more cases, how completely this great theologian had made up his mind, that such was the only way of dealing with heretics. To Epictetus, Bishop of Corinth, who had transmitted to him certain heads of heretical opinions touching the Person of our Lord, he gives the following advice, almost in the tone of reproof. “These^h, it seems, were the subjects on which they were debating and contending with each other—the very persons who vaunt themselves in the confession of the Fathers, drawn up at Nicæa. But I, for my part, am inclined to wonder how Your Piety could endure them; and that you did not at once silence them uttering such words, and confront them with the Creed of the true religion; in order that on hearing it they might either hold their peace, or speaking against it, might be accounted as heretics. For the things above mentioned were never spoken nor heard among Christians, but are altogether foreign to the teaching of the Apostles. This is the reason why I (if I may allege

^h T. i. 903. P.

myself as authority) have caused their sayings, as they appear above, to be simply transcribed in my letter: so that any one who does but hear them, may perceive the shamefulness and impiety which is in them. And though it were necessary more at large to censure and expose the folly of such theorists, yet it were well that the letter should stop here, and no more be set down in writing. For things so evidently betraying their own vileness ought not to have any further labour or inquiry bestowed on them, lest those who are disputatious begin to think they admit of a question. Or it may be right to reply to such words so far only as to say, ‘It is enough that these things belong not to the Catholic Church, neither was this the mind of the Fathers.’ Yet, lest through our entire silence the inventors of evil provide themselves with an excuse for their shamelessness, it may be well to rehearse a few places from the divine Scriptures, for the chance that being so put to shame they may cease from these their unclean imaginings.” In like manner, arguing against Apollinarius, his first challenge isⁱ, *πόθεν ὑμῶν κατηγγέλη*; “Tell me, ye inventors of the new Gospel according to yourselves, (which is not another,) *from what quarter* was it announced to you, that you should call the Flesh [of our Lord] uncreated?” This emphatic question is asked after allegation of the Creed of Nicæa, (that is, of the embodied tradition of the Church,) and comparison of the errors in question with it.

Proceeding to the few details which remain of what took place in the Council, we find nothing to contradict and much to strengthen the idea, that not only St. Athanasius’s doctrine, but also his mode of establishing it, was

ⁱ T. i. 923. E. Ἡμῶν δὲ ἡ πίστις ἐστὶν ὀρθή, καὶ ἐκ διδασκαλίας ἀποστολικῆς ὁρμωμένη καὶ παραδόσεως τῶν πατέρων, βεβαιουμένη ἕκ τε νέας καὶ παλαιάς διαθήκης.

there sanctioned. One slight indication of this may seem to be afforded by an anecdote which Sozomen^k (among others) has preserved. The Bishops, having arrived at Nicæa a few days before the opening of the Council, had many conferences among themselves, (to which, it seems, Arius was also admitted,) on the best way of conducting the debate. "Some were for discouraging all innovation on the faith delivered down from the beginning; those especially whose simplicity of character taught them, without nice inquiry, to accept the faith in God. Others were peremptory, that it was wrong without trial to follow after the more ancient opinions." In a word, the question lay between traditive and private interpretation. Which of the two prevailed, Sozomen does not expressly say; but he does say, that this preliminary discussion proved an effectual trial of the skill of the principal debaters on each side; and that from that time St. Athanasius, being there in attendance on Alexander, obtained the lead in the proceedings of the Council. This does not look as if Athanasius had failed in the preliminary debate; and we know which side he must have taken in it. Moreover, Sozomen goes on to record, in immediate connection with this discussion, the well-known anecdote of the aged and unlearned confessor, who silenced a pagan disputer, present at the Council, by the bare recital of his baptismal Creed, adding these few sentences: "That these things are so, we believe without nice inquiry. Do not thou, then, labour in vain, seeking confutations of those who are exact in faith; and how it was or was not possible for these things to take place; but answer my question at once: Believest thou?" Upon this the philosopher, astounded, replies, 'I believe;' and, avowing his gratitude for his defeat, came over to the old man's opinions: and recom-

^k Lib. ii. §. 17, 18. p. 431. Ed. Vales.

mended to those who before felt with him to be of the same mind: affirming with an oath, that not without Divine influence had this change taken place in him, but that he was urged to become a Christian by some ineffable power." Whether this account be correct in detail or no, that something of the kind took place is clear from the parallel report of Socrates¹. "A little before the assembling of the Bishops in council, the professors of disputation were exercising themselves beforehand in argument with whomsoever they met; and many found their reasoning attractive and pleasant. But a certain confessor, a layman, of a simple mind, opposes himself to the logicians, and says to them, Christ and His Apostles taught us not an art of disputation, nor any vain deceit, but a simple doctrine, the guard of which is faith and good works. On his so speaking, all who were present marvelled, and received the saying: and the disputers, thinking better of it, remained quiet, the simple word of truth having been brought to their ears. The very next day the Bishops assembled." Not to dwell on the possibility that here is something of a Divine sanction given to the appeal to antiquity which our argument supposes; even the lowest statement, that of Socrates, (who had the evidence of an eye-witness to this among other things that passed at Nicæa^m,) implies a decided preference there given to traditional over private interpretations. It shews what bias the Fathers were under the day before the Council was holden.

There is another anecdote, still better accredited, which indicates the esteem in which the argument from antiquity was held among the orthodox at that time. The Novatianist Prelate in Constantinople, Acesius, being present at the Council, though not allowed to take part in it, was asked by the emperor, after the publication of the Creed,

¹ I. 8. p. 20. D.

^m Soer. i. 10. p. 39.

whether he also consented to this faith. “ He replied, ‘ It is no new matter, O emperor, which the synod hath determined ; for so from of old, from the beginning, even from the times of the Apostles, I have received the definition of the faithⁿ.’ ”

In the actual session, the Council having been first opened by speeches from Eustathius, the Patriarch of Antioch, and the emperor Constantine, the next proceeding is related, by that Patriarch himself^o, in these words : “ When the question was put concerning the mode of faith, there was produced that paper, which, containing in it the blasphemy of Eusebius [of Nicomedia], was, in fact, a manifest conviction [of the same], which, being read before all, caused at first hearing inconceivable grief to the audience, τῆς ἐκτροπῆς ἕνεκα, *on account of its great deviation*; and brought incurable disgrace upon the writer.” This shews that a confession of faith was required from the innovators at least; and that, according to the statement of St. Athanasius quoted in the Sermon, it was met with a burst of censure at first hearing, as new and perverse.

But we have also a letter of Eusebius the historian^p, tending to throw light on the mode of proceeding. It is addressed to certain upholders of the new opinions, and purports to explain the part which he, Eusebius, had taken in subscribing the Creed of the Homoöusion. “ I have sent you herewith,” he says, “ as the case required, first the written statement which I offered concerning the faith, afterwards the other, which they have published, with certain additions of their own to my expressions. My formula then, read in the presence of our gracious sovereign, and approved as good and genuine, stands thus.

ⁿ Soer. i. 10. p. 38; Soz. i. 22. p. 436; Gelasius ap. Concil. i. 425.

^o Ap. Theodoret. i. 7. Ὡς δὲ ἐζητήετο τῆς πίστεως ὁ τρόπος, κ. τ. λ.

^p Ap. Theodoret. i. 11; Soer. i. 8. p. 23; St. Athanas. i. 238.

‘As we have received from the Bishops before us, in our first catechetical instruction, and when we were baptized; as also we have learned out of the divine Scriptures, and (what is more) as we have both believed and taught in our offices of Presbyter and Bishop, so now also believing, we offer unto you our faith. We believe in one God,’ &c.⁹’ (reciting the substance, and almost the words of the Nicene Creed, with the exception of the Homoöusion). Having afterwards accounted for his reception of those clauses which were added at Nicæa, he finishes by declaring that he had assented to nothing which did not “appear evidently to concur with the confession which he had just made in the fore-recited formula.” This proves that Eusebius, at any rate, in any confession made or statement allowed by him at Nicæa, had respect to his baptismal Creed, and to the traditionary explanation of it received in his Church. He takes that as his groundwork, and appeals to the Scriptures for his proof. Now Eusebius was not a very likely person to adopt this mode of his own accord. It is well known that he delighted, perhaps to excess, in the exercise of his own learning and acuteness; that he was more apt to idolize talent than antiquity; and that his name has consequently become associated, whether justly or no, with a most dangerous kind of rationalism. So much the more probable is it, that he was guided in this instance by the general voice or feeling of the Council.

These things being well considered, it may perhaps not unreasonably be thought, that the custom which afterwards prevailed, of opening Church Councils with a formal

⁹ Καθὼς παρελάβομεν παρὰ τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν ἐπισκόπων, ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ κατηχήσει καὶ ὅτε τὸ λουτρὸν ἐλαμβάνομεν, καθὼς καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν θείων γραφῶν μεμαθήκαμεν, καὶ ὡς ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἐπισκοπῇ ἐπιστεούμεν τε καὶ ἐδιδάσκομεν, οὕτω καὶ νῦν πιστεύοντες, τὴν ἡμετέραν πίστιν προσαναφέροντες,
κ. τ. λ.

profession of faith, had its origin, or at least found sanction, in the proceedings at Nicæa. The Preface to the Arabic Version of the Nicene Canons, as translated by Bishop Beveridge, states, that “the Confessions (*professiones*), discourses, and sentences of the several holy Fathers [there assembled], were preserved in fifteen books^r.” The document referred to is most probably apocryphal; still there was evidently a tradition as to the form of their proceedings, agreeing in substance with what has now been advanced. Some centuries further back, (A. D. *circ.* 830,) Isidorus Mercator had inserted in the Preface to his Edition of the Councils^s a kind of formulary for the holding of a synod; one of the directions of which is, that as soon as the synod has been regularly opened “*collatio pariter et instructio de mysterio sanctæ Trinitatis habebitur, simulque et ordinibus officiorum, si in omnium sedibus ejusdem celebritatis unitas teneatur:*” *i. e.* “A comparison and explanation shall take place concerning the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and also concerning the orders which relate to [ecclesiastical] offices: [to ascertain] whether or no unity be maintained in all the sees of the aforesaid assembly.” And a little below, that “on the three days of solemn supplication, with which the synod is to open, there shall be no business transacted, *nisi sola collatio de mysterio Sacrosanctæ Trinitatis, et de ordinibus sacris, vel officiorum institutis;* excepting the comparison [before mentioned] concerning the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, and concerning sacred orders, or regulations of offices.”

Reverting to the course taken in particular councils: of what passed at the second general synod at Constantinople,

^r Concil. Harduin. i. 526. E.

^s Ibid. Præf. Isid. Merc. p. 7. B. C. Compare the Note at the end of this Postscript.

A. D. 381, we have no detailed account. The Council, in their report to the emperor Theodosius II. state themselves to have first renewed their concord, *ὁμολοίαν*, with one another'; which word *Concord* might seem to relate to their settlement of the disputes then existing about the see of Constantinople: but the narration of Socrates[†] shews that the comparison of doctrinal views preceded that arrangement; and in the course of it he twice uses the word to denote their consent in the orthodox faith. At all events, they have left it on record, that their adherence to the Nicene Creed was not without reference to the witness of the Church in all ages concerning the Creed of the Apostolical times. "Whether it be persecutions, or afflictions, or threats from our sovereign, or cruelties from persons in office, or any other trial, which we have endured from the heretics, we endured it on behalf of the evangelical faith, as ratified in Nicæa by the three hundred and eighteen Fathers. For this must needs find acceptance, both with you and with us," (they are addressing their brethren, the Bishops of the Church Universal,) "and with all who pervert not the word of the true faith: being most ancient and suitable to our Baptism, and teaching us to believe in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST[‡]."

The Nicene Creed, as enlarged at Constantinople, came, it seems, presently to be regarded as so complete a symbol of sound doctrine, that it superseded in general all necessity

[†] Conc. Harduin. i. 808. B.

[‡] Lib. v. c. 8. p. 265.

[‡] Concil. i. 825; Theodoret. E. H. v. 9. Ἡμεῖς γὰρ εἴτε διωγμούς, εἴτε θλίψεις, εἴτε βασιλικὰς ἀπειλὰς, εἴτε τὰς τῶν ἀρχόντων ὁμολήσας, εἴτε τινα πειρασμὸν ἕτερόν παρὰ τῶν αἰρετικῶν ὑπεμείναμεν, ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς πίστεως, τῆς ἐν Νικαίᾳ τῆς Βιθυνίας παρὰ τῶν τριῶν πατέρων κυρωθείσης, ὑπέστημεν ταύτην γὰρ καὶ ὑμῖν καὶ ἡμῖν καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς μὴ διαστρέφουσι τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθοῦς πίστεως συναρέσκειν δεῖ, πρεσβυτάτην οὖσαν, καὶ ἀκόλουθον τῷ βαπτίσματι, καὶ διδάσκουσαν ἡμᾶς πιστεύειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ΠΑΤΡΟΣ, καὶ τοῦ ΥἱΟΥ, καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ.

for a confession, to be made by each several Bishop, of the belief of himself and his Church, at the first meeting of a Council. Thus at Ephesus^y, professing to observe the exact order of the Canons, they entered on the doctrinal discussion by a solemn recitation of that Creed; "in order that all might be said concerning the faith being compared with that exposition, such sayings as harmonized therewith might be received, and such as varied therefrom rejected." The expression of opinion at Chalcedon was still more remarkable. In the first session the emperor's commissioners proposed to begin the proceedings of the second by a written confession of faith on the part of the several Bishops^z. "Let each boldly set down his faith in writing, having the fear of God before his eyes; with the understanding that our sovereign's own faith is guided by the confessions of the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Fathers, and the canonical epistles and expositions of the holy Fathers Gregory, Basil, Athanasius, Hilary, Ambrose, and the canonical epistles of Cyril, which were read at Ephesus." Two days after, in the second session, they renewed their proposition^a. "The point," they said, "which now demands our inquiry, judgment, and serious attention, is the reinforcement of the true faith. *That*, more than any thing else, is the object of the synod. Knowing then, that to God Himself you will give account each for his own soul, and also for us all,—who desire to be rightly instructed in Christianity, and to have all doubt taken away by the concord and consent, and harmonious exposition and teaching, of the venerable Fathers,—give diligence without fear, favour, or dislike, to set out the faith in its purity: so that those also, who, compared with the general body, appear to be otherwise minded, may, by acknowledgment of the truth, be brought back to unanimity." To this, the Bishops

^y Concil. i. 1361. E.^z Ibid. ii. 273. A.^a Concil. ii. 284; 5.

replied by acclamation, "Other exposition [of the faith] no man maketh, nor do we endeavour nor dare to put forth any; for the Fathers have taught us, and the things set forth by them are preserved in writing; contrary to these we have no power to say any thing." The acclamation was repeated more than once: "We make no fresh confession in writing: the Canon forbids it: the old confession is enough: let the rules of the Fathers prevail:" which Florentius, Bishop of Sardis, enforced by the strong reason, that "it was not possible for them to write hastily on the faith, taught as they were to obey the holy Nicene Council, and that which was rightly and religiously assembled at Ephesus." Then was recited the Nicene Creed; whereupon their acclamation was^b: "This we all believe; in this we were baptized,—in this we baptize this is the true faith; this is the holy faith; this is the eternal faith . . . thus we believe, every one of us."

A reference to the Councils would shew other examples of the like especial deference paid to the Creed of Nicæa, as ratified by the four synods above mentioned^c. One more only shall be here mentioned. The Assembly at Trent, in their third session and first decree concerning the faith, "decrees and determines before all to begin by this confession of their faith; following herein, as they say, the examples of the Fathers, who, in their more venerable Councils, when commencing business, have been wont to hold out this, as their shield against all heresies whatsoever^d." Well had it been for them and for us, had they followed antiquity as religiously in all things!

So far, then, as the practice of other Councils affords

^b Ibid. 288. A.

^c E. g. 2 Constantinop. t. iii. 70; 3 Tolet. t. iii. 471; Emerit. iii. 999; 11 Tolet. iii. 1019; 3 Bracarens. iii. 1031; 3 Constantinop. iii. 1060, &c.

^d Concil. t. x. 20.

any presumption of what was done at Nicæa, we should expect to find that the Fathers looked in the first place to their Creeds before acknowledged, which as yet, perhaps, were mostly unwritten^e; and did not set themselves, as though hitherto destitute of formularies, to the compiling of an entirely new one by their own judgment out of the Scriptures. And this expectation is confirmed by the substance of the Creed itself: which every child must perceive to be substantially the same formula with the old baptismal Creed,—the Creed of the Apostles^f,—only expanded in the two points which specially required it. And as to those additions and explanations, they were indeed most carefully and reverentially *proved* from Scripture, yet even in them the Fathers went to Church Tradition^g for the critical and decisive phrase, “of One Substance with the Father;” on which we have ever since mainly depended, as constituting one of our best securities against the profane conformity of heretics in heart.

These, and similar considerations, have appeared heretofore to learned men so decisive, that they have not scrupled to make such affirmations as the following^h: “That ecclesiastical tradition, which Vincentius Lirinensis so much commends, did especially consist in the confessions or registers of particular Churches. Now the unanimous consent of so many several Churches as *exhibited their confessions to the Nicene Council*, being not dependent one of another, was a pregnant

^e Compare St. Hilary writing to the Bishops of Gaul: “Blessed are ye in the Lord, and glorious, who, retaining the perfect apostolical faith in the confession of the inward conscience, to this hour know nothing of written professions of faith.” *De Synodis*, c. 63. p. 1187. Ed. Bened.

^f See the Creeds of Alexander and Eusebius, as quoted before; and compare the accounts given by Tertullian and Irenæus; and Bp. Bull, *Jud. Eccl. Cathol.* &c. §. 4, 5, 6; with Grabe’s annotation.

^g S. Ath. i. 230. *De Decr. Nic. Syn.* §. 25—27.

^h Jackson’s *Works*, iii. 892.

argument to any impartial understanding man, that this faith, wherein they all agreed, had been delivered unto them by the Apostles and their followers." And againⁱ: "The unanimous consent of so many distinct visible Churches, as *exhibited their several confessions, catechisms, or testimonies of their own and their forefathers' faith, unto the four first Œcumenical Councils, was an argument of the same force and efficacy against Arius and other heretics, for whose conviction those Councils were called, as the general consent and practice of all nations in worshipping some divine power or other, hath been in all ages against the Atheists. . . . Nothing, besides the evidence of truth delivered unto the Christian world by Christ and His Apostles, would have kept so many several Churches as communicated their confessions to the Councils of Nice and Ephesus, &c. in the unity of the same faith."*

Hear, again, Leslie, speaking of the provincial synod, which prepared the way for the proceedings at Nicæa. "This was the method taken in the Council called at Alexandria against Arius; it was asked by Alexander, the Archbishop who presided, *Quis unquam talia audivit?*—'Who ever heard of this doctrine before?' And it being answered by all the Bishops there assembled in the negative, it was concluded a novel doctrine, and contrary to what had been universally received in the Christian Church. Thus every doctrine may be reduced to fact: for it is purely fact, whether such doctrine was received or not^k." Bishop Taylor says^l: "It is not certain that the Nicene Fathers at their meeting recited any other Creed than the Apostolical:" assuming that they recited some Creed.

And after all, though some doubt were still thought to hang on the exact order of their deliberations, their general

ⁱ Jackson's Works, iii. 892.

^k See *Catena Patrum*, No. iii. p. 102.

^l X. 462.

rule is surely expressed, with sufficient plainness, and on unexceptionable testimony, in the three following passages of St. Athanasius. First, of the instinctive and inevitable comparison which the new doctrines underwent with those before received, he writes: "Who^m, on hearing the word Son, does not conceive in his mind the thought of identity of substance with the Father? Who, when he learned in his first Catechism, that God had a Son, and made all things by His own Word, did not so receive it in his mind as we now understand it? Who, at the first origin of the impure heresy of the Arians, was not presently astounded at the mere hearing of their words, as at persons uttering strange things, and sowing a new seed, contrary to the Word sown in the beginning?" Secondly, he presents the Creed to the emperor Jovian, not merely as the judgment of the present Church on the meaning of the Scriptures, but rather as her testimony to the fact, that "this faith had all along been known to all in the Church, being learned and read out of the divine Scriptures. For in this the saints, being perfected, endured martyrdom, and now are at rest in the Lord. And this faith would have continued throughout unimpaired, but for the wickedness of certain heretics, who have dared to pervert it . . . although our Fathers lost no time in assembling at Nicæa, and pronouncing the anathema on them. But the faith of the Catholic Church they professed in writing; so that by the proclaiming thereof every where, the heresy might be quenched which the perverse disputers had kindledⁿ." Lastly, in respect of those portions of the Creed which appeared in some sense new, he is careful to shew that for these also they had authority from antiquity, as well as proof from holy Scripture, (thus acting on the very principle laid down in the English Canon of 1571, to which

^m *Orat.* ii. *contr. Arian.* i. 502. B.

ⁿ I. 780.

reference has before been made): "The Fathers," says he, "inserted the clause of the Son's consubstantiality with the Father, and anathematised those who affirmed a diversity of substance, not in terms which they had framed for themselves, but which they too had learned from the Fathers before them which being so, the Creed of Nicæa is sufficient, agreeing as it does also with the ancient Bishops^o." This shews in what light the framers of the Creed wished it to be viewed; and that the Church did so receive it, the words of Epiphanius (among others) may serve to testify: "They^p professed the faith of the Fathers, orthodox and unswerving, and delivered down to us from the Apostles and Prophets."

Now if St. Athanasius and the Nicene Fathers were thus earnest and constant in resorting to Tradition, in order to decide among conflicting interpretations of Scripture, and settle the fundamentals of our most holy faith; that circumstance alone is a sufficient answer to the suspicion, that reliance on Primitive Tradition leads of course to disparagement of Scripture. For certainly, if there be one among divines, ancient and modern, who commits his cause to the witness of Scripture more unreservedly than the rest, and expresses a deeper reverence in listening to its voice, and a more entire preparation of heart to follow whithersoever it shall lead him, that one is the great St. Athanasius. But the more unfeignedly he revered the Bible, and felt the necessity of obeying it in all things, the more thankfully did he avail himself of the greatest of providential helps to the right understanding of the Bible, the record of faith which the New Testament itself assumes to have been taught to those for whose immediate use it was written. That record helps to explain the Scriptures, somewhat in the same way, and with the same kind of

^o *Ad Afros*, §. 9. t. i. 898. C.

^p Epiph. in *Hær. Arian.*

evidence, as the grammar of a language, once rightly taught, explains the sentences of that language. If truth and sound philological knowledge would be advanced by throwing aside the grammar rules which we have learned, and analysing sentences till we have constructed each a new grammar for ourselves, then, and not else, the proposition, that each man must make out his own Gospel from Scripture, discarding all confidence in traditional Creeds, may be tenable in common sense, whatever Piety may think of it. Why is the assurance of faith any more undermined by accepting a constant and practically infallible Tradition, to the effect that what is to us the obvious meaning of the Bible, was always accounted its true meaning, than by accepting in like manner the similar traditions, that these books, and no other, are the Bible; that these words in English answer to the corresponding words in the sacred languages, out of which they profess to be translated? Indeed, were it not for Romish corruptions, it would not be at all easy to enter into the mind of those who feel concerning Primitive Tradition otherwise than as if it were a great and real help from above. See what it comes to in this case of the Nicene Creed. Had the interpretation and anathema therein contained been merely the deliberate judgment of the three hundred Bishops, undoubtedly this would have been a very material fact: more material, perhaps, considering all things, than the like assent at any other time: still the whole would have been matter, not of testimony, but of opinion, and could not have proved, in any sense, an end of controversy. It might still be said, as unthinking people now say, "Why should I submit my judgment to the judgment of three hundred persons assembled at Nicæa fifteen hundred years ago?" However, as the matter stands, we have the full benefit of their judgment, (for the remains of St. Athanasius alone are sufficient to shew, that they

fully and critically examined the Scriptures on all the disputed points): and we have moreover this greater—this unspeakable benefit; that by them has been preserved the irrefragable testimony of the Church to the fact, that the Apostles interpreted the Bible in this way, and held their interpretation to be fundamental.

The argument may be thus stated. Christians disagree among themselves which are the essential, fundamental truths of their religion. Now if we could know in what doctrine Theophilus, (*e. g.*) to whom St. Luke* wrote, had been catechised, we should know these fundamental truths: those truths which the eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word did most emphatically deliver to their converts. Now of course the fundamentals taught to Theophilus were the same as those taught to other converts: they were, in short, the baptismal Creed. However that Creed might vary in terms, as it was occasionally delivered by the Apostles and their successors, it must have been the same in substance all over the world; being not so much the Creed of the several Apostles, as of that Holy Spirit, by Whom they were all alike guided. Can we any how ascertain the substance of that Creed? The Council of Nicæa enables us to do so, practically and effectually—nay, infallibly. For the fact to which the three hundred prelates bore witness, was one in which they could neither be deceived themselves, nor be able to deceive others. They must have known each one of them the baptismal Creed of his own Church, and the interpretation of it there commonly received, and professed by himself in his letters communicatory when he first entered on his episcopate. They could not, therefore, be deceived themselves. Neither could they deceive others: for, (not to dwell on the evidence of sincerity which many of them had given, and some afterwards gave again, by enduring

pain and privations for the Gospel's sake,) every Christian must have known his baptismal Creed, and every Bishop must have known what letters communicatory he had received from his newly-ordained brethren. Moreover, their testimony ranges far beyond those who were actually present in the Council. They were in the nature of a representative body; and it may be remarked by the way, that the Church councils are perhaps the first decided instance in the world's history of the adoption of that mode of government. The three hundred and eighteen were but so many out of the eighteen hundred prelates of the Roman world, whom circumstances permitted to be present at the Council; and their decisions were scrupulously communicated to their absent brethren, and formally approved by them, with very trifling exceptions. "Know, O prince beloved of Heaven," writes St. Athanasius to the emperor Jovian⁹, "that these things have been preached from the beginning, and this Creed the Fathers who assembled at Nicæa confessed; and to these have been awarded the suffrages of all the Churches every where in their respective places: both in Spain, and Britain, and Gaul, and all Italy and Dalmatia, Dacia and Mysia, Macedonia and all Greece; and in all Africa, and Sardinia, and Cyprus, and Crete, Pamphylia and Lycia, and Isauria, and those in Egypt and the divisions of Libya, and Pontus and Cappadocia, and those near us, and the Churches in the east, all besides a few persons who take part with Arius. For as to all the aforesaid, we know by their conduct what their judgment is; and moreover, we have their letters. And thou knowest that should there be some few who speak in opposition to this faith, they cannot create any prejudice against it, the

⁹ I. 781. Even the Arian Philostorgius bore witness to their unanimity. *Ad calc.* Theodoret. *E. H.* 469. B. Ed. Vales.

whole world maintaining the Apostolical Creed." We need not, therefore, hesitate to accept the Nicene formula as the testimony of all the Churches.

Any suspicion which might arise, of the proceedings having been tainted by political influence, is sufficiently obviated by what remains of Constantine's own correspondence at that time. Whether from ignorance, he being yet a catechumen and recent convert, or from the habit of looking at all things with the eye of a mere statesman, or from whatever reason, he was far, indeed, from entering into the views of St. Athanasius and those who acted with him. His language in the letter to Alexander, whereby he at first endeavoured to stifle the controversy, was such as this^r: "A certain empty question, which ought neither to have been asked nor answered . . . an argument kindled not concerning any main point of the Divine commands . . . no new heresy brought in . . . a dispute about matters trifling to an excess of insignificance . . . you may keep up communion with each other, however decidedly your opinions vary in some minute point of detail." And it is too well known how easily he was afterwards perverted by the arts of Eusebius. The agreement, therefore, among the Bishops was in no sort the result of state influence: it can only be explained by the fact, that such was in reality the tenor of the traditional confessions of their several Churches.

Now such a harmony of statements all over the world, even beyond the limits of the Roman Empire, (for the Indians too are mentioned as allowing the Creed^s;) admits of no account but a common origin; and that common origin can only be the first Gospel, as it was every where preached

^r Ap. Soer. i. 7. p. 15. D. E; 16. C; 17. C.

^s St. Ath. ad Afros, §. 2. αὐτὴ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην πεπλήρωκε ταύτην ἔγνωσαν καὶ Ἴνδοι, καὶ ὅσοι παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις βαρβάροις εἰσὶ Χριστιανοί. i. 892. B.

by Apostles and apostolical men. It is, in fact, a complete instance of successful application of the triple test of Vincentius. The "*ubique*" is insured by the Council representing all Churches; the "*semper*," in each Church, by the succession of Bishops, each receiving the Creed as a trust at his consecration; the "*ab omnibus*," by the like delivery of the same Creed to every Christian at his Baptism. The whole together constitutes an infallible tradition, of the same sort as that which induces us to receive the Scriptures themselves as genuine. And the comparison of it with Holy Scripture, which took place at Nicæa, and has been since repeated over and over, is the same kind of satisfactory confirmation to it, as when, in surveying a country, a line on being actually measured is found to be exactly of the length, which it ought to be on computation, perhaps through a long series of triangles. Such an operation strengthens the surveyor's confidence, on the one hand in the goodness of his instruments, on the other in the accuracy of his figures: just as the coincidence of Scripture and Tradition at Nicæa tends to prove (may we not say morally demonstrates?) both that the tradition is apostolical and that the interpretation is sound. Nor does it appear that the Arians of that time often, if ever, questioned this broad statement of Church practice; they commonly satisfied themselves with metaphysical and critical objections to particular words in the Creed, or particular constructions of the text of Scripture.

Now because the Romanists make bold with the word Tradition on very different matters from this—mere instructions of a part of the present Church, in no wise able to stand the test of Vincentius, even supposing them uncontradicted in Scripture—are we therefore to throw aside or depreciate a tradition, established as we see the Nicene Creed is? Can we fairly say it is of small use, either in

confirming the natural interpretation of God's word, or in directing us what sort of points to esteem fundamental? Can any one of us soberly say, with any degree of confidence, where he himself might now have been without it? Take a case but too possible: suppose an inquiring person, not scholar enough to detect the falsehood and sophistry of the Arian and Socinian interpretations, nor to follow the argument when others detect them; must not this man rest his faith on Tradition? *i. e.* on the assurances of better scholars than himself, that the words of Scripture really mean what the Church says they do? And which Tradition would be safer and more consoling,—that of a few scholars and their writings, or that of the Apostolical Church, properly so called? Surely this latter, rightly understood, is a great blessing, and touches the foundation, and we cannot be too thankful for it. Surely men know not what they are doing, when they go about to shake our reliance on it.

In conclusion, a few words shall be offered to those who recoil from Tradition not so much on argumentative grounds, as because they seem to feel that whatever is introduced, over and above the words of Holy Scripture, lessens the sacredness of any religious contemplation, and hinders it from being altogether devotional. Such persons would do well to consider, whether the view which they depreciate would not tend to put them more entirely in possession of the words of Scripture, exempting them once and for ever from haunting doubts, and leaving them free to such thoughts as piety delights in. Let them once fairly endeavour to imagine themselves convinced that the Nicene Tradition is true and divine, and see what would then be their feelings on the subject. It would be with them in some measure as if a voice came from Heaven, to say, This and this only is the meaning of the Scriptures touching the foundation of the faith. Were such a miracle

to be vouchsafed, would it take away veneration from the Scriptures? Would it shake our confidence in them? Would it not be welcomed by some as a deliverance from doubt; by others as superseding in a great measure all necessity for that kind of critical discussion of God's Word, which is continually leading them into peril of irreverence; by all, as a most merciful addition to the supernatural treasure of Faith and Hope? Now the case of the Nicene Tradition is perhaps as near an approach to the realization of this supposed miracle, as might consist with the ordinary course of God's moral government. Perhaps, had the evidence for it been more overpowering, no room would have been left for the requisite trial of our faith.

It follows, that we obtain in this way not only more entire conviction of understanding than if we were left to the unaided study of Scripture, but more also of that which is, on earth, Faith's appropriate sanction and encouragement—the reverential sense of the immediate presence of God. We discern an echo, as it were, of the Divine voice, remoté but unquestionable, and infallibly guiding us towards the true and only temple:—a ray, not from Antiquity only, but from the very Source of light, falling on the pages of the Bible, and bringing out in its full lustre that high and sacred Truth, which many might otherwise have failed to discern, and many more feared to enunciate. As things are, we see it so clearly, that we can hardly understand how any one should ever miss it; and so, as in many other instances, the very abundance, anticipating our want, hinders our being duly thankful. But it is the part of Faith to remedy this; and the part also of Charity to remember our brethren, who feel, many of them, and own their need of such guidance.

Of course, if so it had pleased Almighty God, the Scriptures might have been all clear of themselves; or

their meaning might have been clearly revealed to individuals at a certain stage of their progress in the Christian life: or there might be somewhere in the present Church an unerring court of appeal to fix their interpretation. Men may go on imagining the advantages of such a dispensation, until they have persuaded themselves that things are really so ordered. But theories of that kind, after all that can be said in their favour,—must they not incur the censure of true wisdom, as partaking of “that idle and not very innocent employment of forming imaginary models of a world, and schemes of governing it?” How much better, humbly to acquiesce in God’s dispensations as we find them! How much more dutiful, with all seriousness to use our privilege of belonging to a Church, which on the one hand refers us to Scripture as the standard and treasure of all necessary doctrine, on the other hand “ties her doctors, as much as the Council of Trent does, to expound Scripture according to the consent of the ancient Fathers.”

† Bp. Butler, *Pref. to Anal.* sub fine. “ Bp. Taylor’s *Works*, x. 322.

Note, see page 399.

It may be well to insert here the whole of the formulary for the opening of a synod, as it is given by Isidore, and from him by Hardouin in the Preface to his "Concilia," t. i. col. 6—10.

*The order according to which the sacred Synod should be held in the
Name of God.*

At the first hour of the day, before sunrise, let all be cast out of the Church; and, the entrances being barred, let all the door-keepers stand at the one door, through which the Prelates are to enter. And let all the Bishops, assembling, go in together, and take their seats according to the time of their consecration. When all the Bishops have come in and taken their places, next let those Presbyters be summoned, whose admission the nature of the case in hand seems to warrant. And let no Deacon intrude himself among them. After these, may be admitted the more eminent among the Deacons, whose presence is required by the regular form of proceeding. And a circle being made of the Bishops' seats, let the Presbyters sit down behind them: those, namely, whom the Metropolitan has selected to be his assessors; such, of course, as may act with him both in judging and in pronouncing sentence. Let the Deacons stand in sight of the Bishops: then let the laity also enter, who, by choice of the Council, have obtained the privilege of being there. Moreover, the Notaries must also come in, as is directed by the regular form, for reading documents and taking notes. Then, the doors being fastened, and the Prelates sitting in long silence, and lifting up their whole heart to the Lord, the Archdeacon shall say, Pray ye. And presently they shall all fall on their faces to the earth, as well the Bishops as the Presbyters; and they continuing long in silent prayer, with weepings and mournings, one of the elder Bishops shall arise, and pour out a supplication aloud unto the Lord, they all lying still on the ground. He shall say,

"Behold, we are here, O Lord the Holy Ghost, we are here: bound indeed by our sinful nature as men, yet in Thy name especially assembled together. Come to us, and be Thou with us, and deign to pour Thyself

into our hearts; teach us what we are doing, whither we are going; and shew us what measures it is our duty to take: that, by Thine own aid, we may be able to please Thee in all things. Be Thou alone both the Prompter and the Executor of our decisions, Who alone, with God the Father and His Son, art Possessor of the glorious Name. Suffer us not to be perverters of justice, Thou, Who most exceedingly delightest in equity. Let not ignorance draw us the wrong way, nor favour bias us, nor acceptance of gift or person corrupt; but unite us to Thyself effectually, by the gift of that grace which is Thine only: that we may be one in Thee, and in nothing swerve from the truth; so that, as we are assembled in Thy Name, we may in all things uphold Justice under the sway of Religion; so that here our sentence may in nothing depart from Thee, and in future for things well done we may obtain eternal rewards."

In this supplication, the prayer of 'Our Father' is not to be recited, nor the Blessing, but the supplication only itself to be confirmed [by an 'Amen.']

But when there are more Metropolitans than one, then by another the following prayer is repeated.

"O Lord, Who commandest us to speak justice, and to judge the things that are right; grant unto us, that neither iniquity be found in our mouth, nor corruption in our mind; that with a pure heart we join discourse yet more carefully purified; that justice may go forth in our doings, and no guile be found in our tongue."

And by the third Metropolitan, in the third place, the following prayer is recited.

"O Lord Jesu, Who hast promised by the sacred oracle of Thy Word, that where two or three are gathered together in Thy Name, Thou wouldest vouchsafe to be present in the midst of them; be Thou graciously present in our assembly, and illuminate our hearts by Thy mercy; that we may so keep the straight path of righteousness, as not in any measure to err from the excellency of mercy."

Another:

"Unbind, O Lord, the chain of our souls, and break the bond of wickedness wherein we are held; that for our deliverance we may render praise to Thee, whose chastisement we fear for our transgressions.

"God, Who willest that the truth should be spoken by the sons of men, and whose delight is, that they should deal purely in judgment;

vouchsafe unto us to have an upright mind, that we may be able to utter with our lips the true justice."

The supplication being ended, and all having answered 'Amen,' the Archdeacon says again, 'Stand up.' Immediately let all arise, and with all fear of God, and orderly discipline, let Bishops and Presbyters both take their seats. And thus, all in their places sitting silently, a Deacon, wearing the Albe, bringing forward in the midst the Book of the Canons, reads aloud the chapters on the manner of holding Councils; i. e. from the Third Council of Toledo, No. 18: also, from the Canons of the Oriental Fathers, which Martin, [Bishop of Braga,] translated into Latin; No. 18, *Of the manner of holding a Synod*. Also from the Fourth of Toledo, No. 3. Also from the Council of Chalcedon, No. 18. Also from the Council of Agatha, (Agde in Languedoc,) No. 25 or 26: or any other of the Canons, which may seem to the Metropolitan fitter to be read. And the extract from the Canons being ended, the Metropolitan Bishop shall address the Council with an exhortation, thus saying:

"Behold, most holy Prelates, having first offered our prayer to God, I present myself to your brotherhood with words of affectionate exhortation, and by the name of God beseech you, that whatsoever things you shall hear spoken by us, concerning the Deity, and concerning sacred orders, or religious conduct, you will receive with all piety, and with entire reverence strive to fulfil. Should it so happen that some one of you should differ from any opinion expressed, when we come all of us to mutual conference, let him, without any scruple about making disturbance, propose, to be conferred on again, the subjects of his scruple: in order that by God's favour he may either give or receive instruction. In the next place, with the like adjuration, I approach and entreat you, that none of you in judgment either accept persons, or depart from the truth, smitten by fear or favour. Take care that you handle so religiously whatever shall occur to be judged of by our assembly, that neither peevish contention, to the overthrow of justice, find any place among us, nor yet in long searching for equity, the vigour and vigilance of our order begin to grow lukewarm."

After this exhortation, wherewith the Metropolitan is wont to address the whole synod, presently the King, with his nobles, enters into the Council; and first, dismissing the attendant Bishops to a station behind him, turning to the altar, there says a prayer; and the prayer being over, he turns to the Council and speaks. And, falling on his face to the ground, and then raising himself, he both recommends himself to

the prayers of the Bishops, and also, addressing the whole Council, with religious exhortation urges on them the duty of acting by the highest rule of justice. His exhortation being ended, the Deacon says, ‘Let us pray.’

Then, the King having turned to the east, let all the Prelates together fall prostrate as before; and so let the following prayer, with the Lord’s Prayer, be recited.

“O God our King, who swayest the dominion of kings, by Whose governance it is exalted, and by Whose abandonment it groweth frail; let Thy servant N. have Thee present as his Director. Give unto him, O Lord, a right and firm faith, and never to grow weary of watching over Thy law. Let him so excel in uprightness of life, that he may be pleasing in the eyes of Thy Majesty: so rule over the nations in this life, that after his departure he may be crowned with the elect. Our Father,” &c.

The Blessing.

“Be thou blessed, most serene Prince, by the Lord of all Powers, and the Almighty God. *Amen.* May He inspire thee to do mercy, and [therewith] to temper justice. *Amen.* He who hath assigned to thee the kingdom, may He Himself keep thine heart unharmed from the mischiefs of all people. *Amen.* And thou in whose sight our assembly is venerable for the Lord’s sake, mayest thou, with all thine, after long ages, receive the crown. *Amen.* Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, with God the Father, and the Holy Ghost, One God, is glorified for ever.”

This Blessing having been pronounced, the Deacon says to him, ‘In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, depart in peace.’ Thereupon all shall answer, ‘Thanks be to God.’ And immediately the King retires from the assembly of the Council.

After the departure therefore of the King, and the exhortation of the Archbishop before mentioned, shall enter in all who are Priests, Deacons, or in religious orders of any kind, to the hearing of doctrinal discussion. Then the Archdeacon shall read the Canon of the Eleventh Council of Toledo, (No. I.) against tumultuous excitement in Councils. After the reading of this Canon, the proceedings of the Council of Ephesus shall be regularly read over; then a comparison and explanation shall take place concerning the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and also concerning the orders which relate to [ecclesiastical] offices; to ascertain whether

or no unity be maintained in all the sees of the aforesaid assembly. In relation also to those causes, as the time of day may allow, shall be read the Epistles of Pope Leo to the Bishop Flavianus, concerning the errors of Eutyches and the mystery of the Trinity; the Canons also concerning unity of offices. Nor shall the Council pass to any other business, until all these have been gone through. Provided always that in the whole three days of solemn supplication nothing else be transacted or discussed, but only the comparison [before mentioned] concerning the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, and concerning sacred orders, or regulations of offices, so as that these subjects be entirely gone through in the course of those three entire days: that, as aforesaid, nothing else be done, but simply the inquiry carried on which relates to the aforesaid matters: provided also that in every case the proceedings commence with the reading of some document suitable to the order and cause which is to be discussed.

A Prayer to be said on the second day at the opening of the Council.

“ We bow unto Thee, O Lord, the knees of our hearts, and beseech Thee that we may obtain the blessings which we most need at Thy hands; namely, that walking in watchful care before Thee, we may be of exact judgment in the arduous discrimination [of doctrine], and loving mercy, may be eminent by zeal in such a course as shall please Thee.”

Also a Prayer, on the third day, rehearsed at the opening of the Council.

“ From Thee, O Lord, with the words of an inward cry, we ask with one accord, that, being strengthened by the countenance of Thy grace, we may be made fearless heralds of the Truth, and have power to speak Thy word with all boldness.”

After these things, on the fourth day, other causes shall be admitted in order. And thereupon all the religious persons, who on the former days had been present in the Council for spiritual instruction's sake, shall go out; some Presbyters keeping their seats in the Council, whom the Metropolitan shall have appointed to that honour.

In any case, throughout the aforesaid three Litany days, both Bishops and Presbyters, with the Minister who bids the prayers, shall begin by prostrating themselves in supplication. And then, after a collect, or a recapitulation of their prayers by the Metropolitan, they shall arise, and discuss, as was said, divine things only. But on other days, all standing

by, the Collect shall be pronounced. And so sitting down they shall judge the matters brought in question. But let no disturbance be allowed, either among those who sit in the Council, or the by-standers.

Further, they are to enter into the Council each day in the same manner and order as is herein-before appointed. For the rest, whether they be either Presbyters or Deacons, Clerks or Laymen, not themselves members of the Council, who think themselves bound to appeal to it in any matter, let them give notice of their cause to the Archdeacon of the metropolitan church, and let him mention it to the Council; then let them severally be permitted to come in and state their case. But let none of the Bishops retire from the general assembly until the hour come for all to retire. Again, let no one presume to break up the Council, unless all things shall have been so determined, as that every point which has been settled by common consultation, be subscribed by the hand of every Bishop severally. Provided always, that two or three days before the Council be dissolved, they revise with diligent considerations all the Canons they have drawn up, lest haply they may have stumbled in something. Also, that on the day appointed for the breaking up of the Council, the Canons which have been decreed in the holy Synod be read publicly before the Church. And when they are ended, there shall be a choral response of 'Amen.'

Then returning to the place where they sat in Council, let them subscribe the same Canons. The Metropolitan also must give them notice concerning the next following Easter, on what day it comes on; also of the time in the next year when they shall come to hold Council. Certain of the Bishops, too, must be selected, to assist the Metropolitan in the celebration of the feasts of the Nativity and of Easter. After these things, the Archdeacon saying, 'Pray ye,' let all together cast themselves down on the ground; and when they have there prayed for a considerable time, let one of the seniors recite this prayer:

"There is not, O Lord, in any conscience of man such virtue as may be able, without offence, to declare the judgments of Thy will. Therefore, seeing that Thine eyes have beheld our frailty, account it for perfection, we beseech Thee, that it is our chief wish to decide by the perfect rule of justice. Thee in our beginnings we did ask to meet us [with Thine aid]; Thee again in this termination of our decisions we beseech to be present, making allowance for our deviations. For why? to spare our ignorance; to allow for our wandering; to crown the full service of our prayers with full practical efficacy. And because, through the galling of our conscience, we pine away, fearing lest either ignorance

should have drawn us into some error, or haply too eager will should have urged us to swerve aside from justice: for this we supplicate and beseech Thee, that if we have contracted any offence during the solemnization of this Council, by Thy pardon we may find it venial; and that whereas we are about to give release from attendance on this assembled Council, we ourselves may first be released from all the bands of our own sins: so that as transgressors Thy pardon may attend us, and as confessing our faults to Thee, Thy eternal recompense."

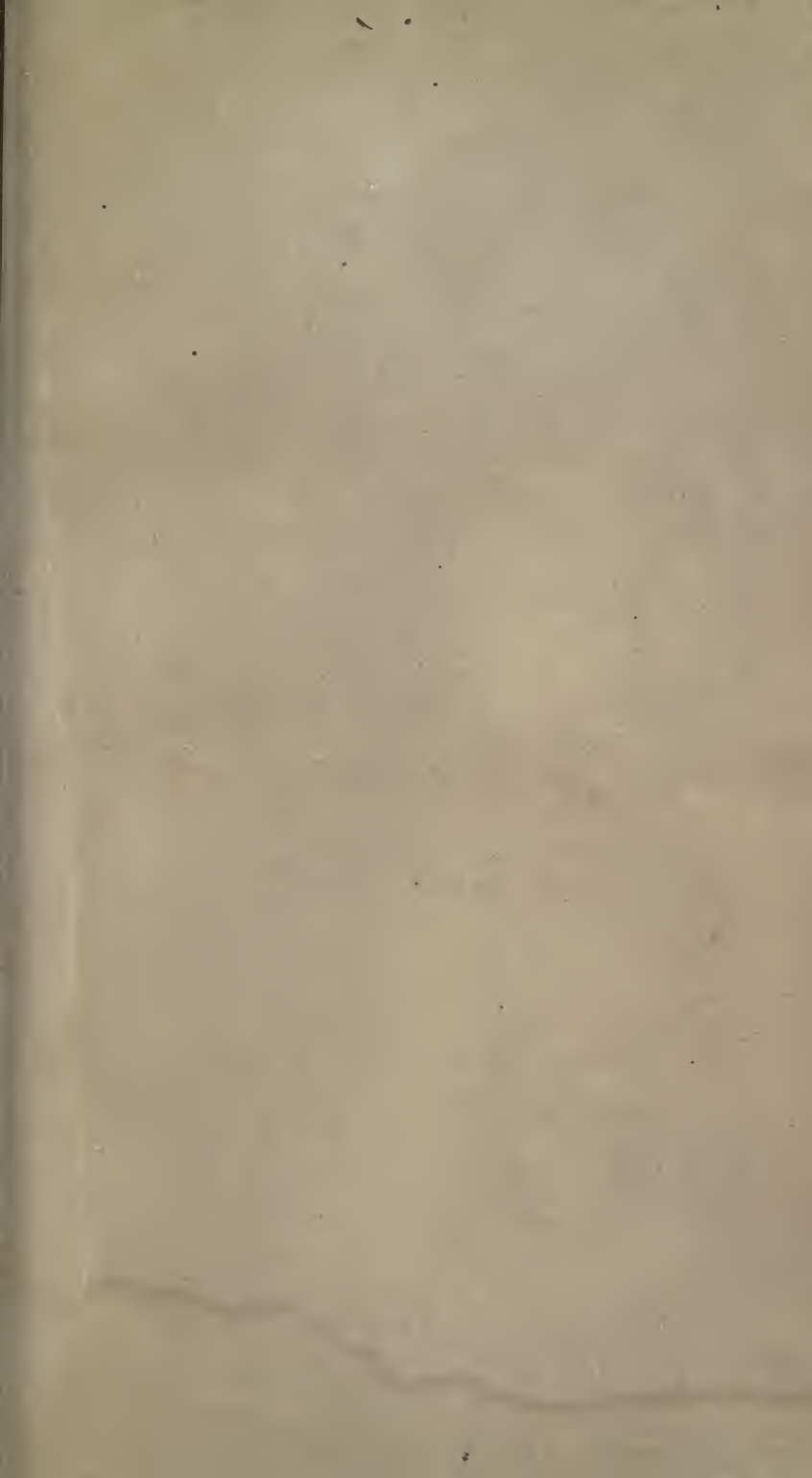
To this prayer the prayer called Pater Noster shall be subjoined; and over them still prostrate the following Blessing shall be pronounced:

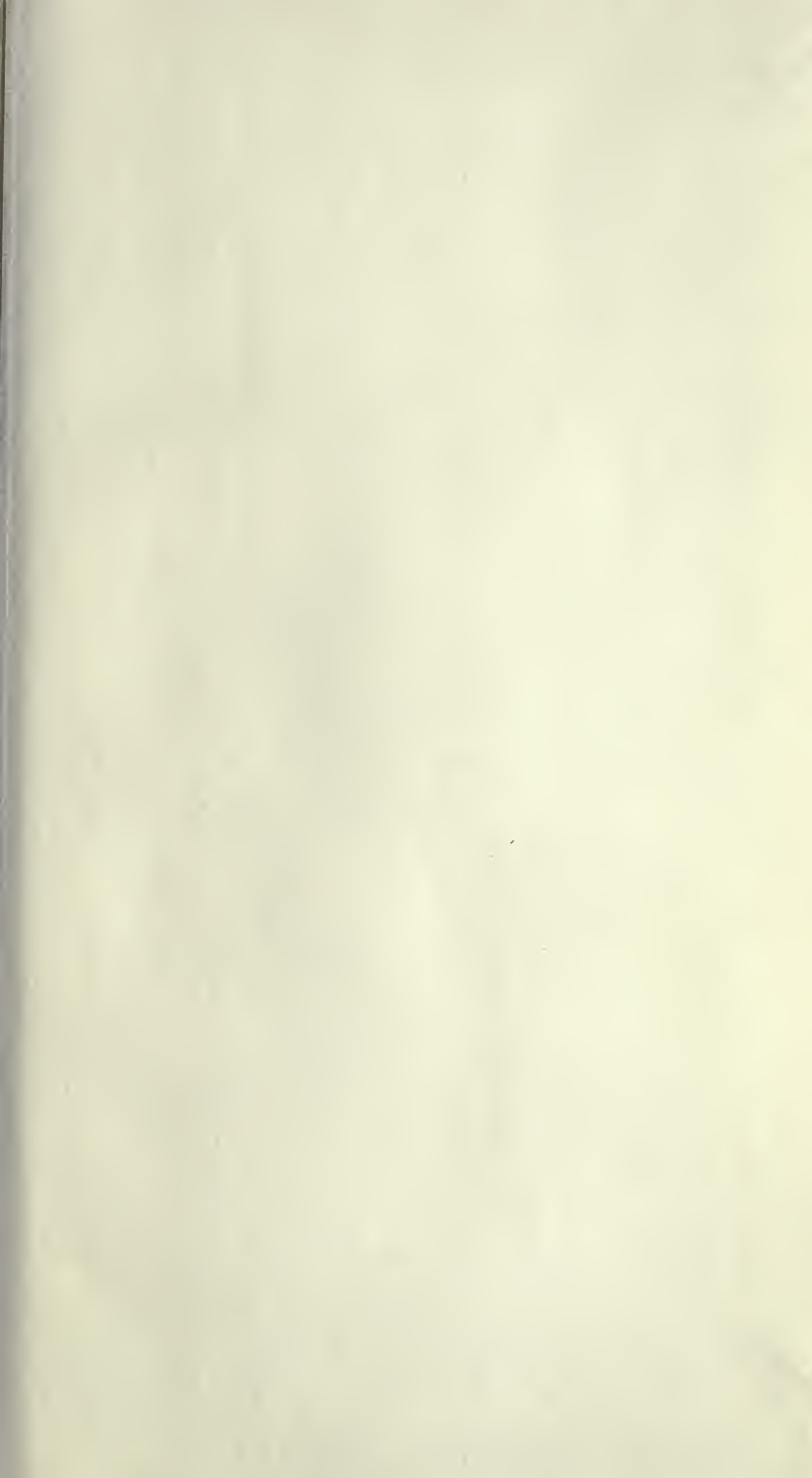
"Christ, the Son of God, Who is the Beginning and the End, vouchsafe unto you the fulness of charity. And may He Who hath brought you safely to the completion of this Synod, cause you to be absolved from all infection of sin. *Amen.* So that, freed more entirely from all guilt, absolved also by the gift of the Holy Ghost, you may return happily, and seek again unharmed the resting places of your own habitations. *Amen.* Which may He vouchsafe to grant, Whose kingdom and dominion abideth for ever and ever. *Amen.*"

These directions having been observed, and the Archdeacon having said, 'In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us go in peace;' presently all shall arise together, and the Metropolitan still keeping his seat, all alike, beginning from him first, shall mutually bestow on each other the kiss [of peace]. And thus, with the mutual giving and receiving of peace, the meeting of the Council shall be dissolved.

The above document most probably belongs to the good days of the Spanish Church, when it first recovered from Arianism. It must have been drawn up after the 11th Council of Toledo, A.D. 675, and apparently before 714, at which time the Saracens began to overrun Spain. This would settle its probable date within about 40 years.

THE END.







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Sermons academical and occasional

